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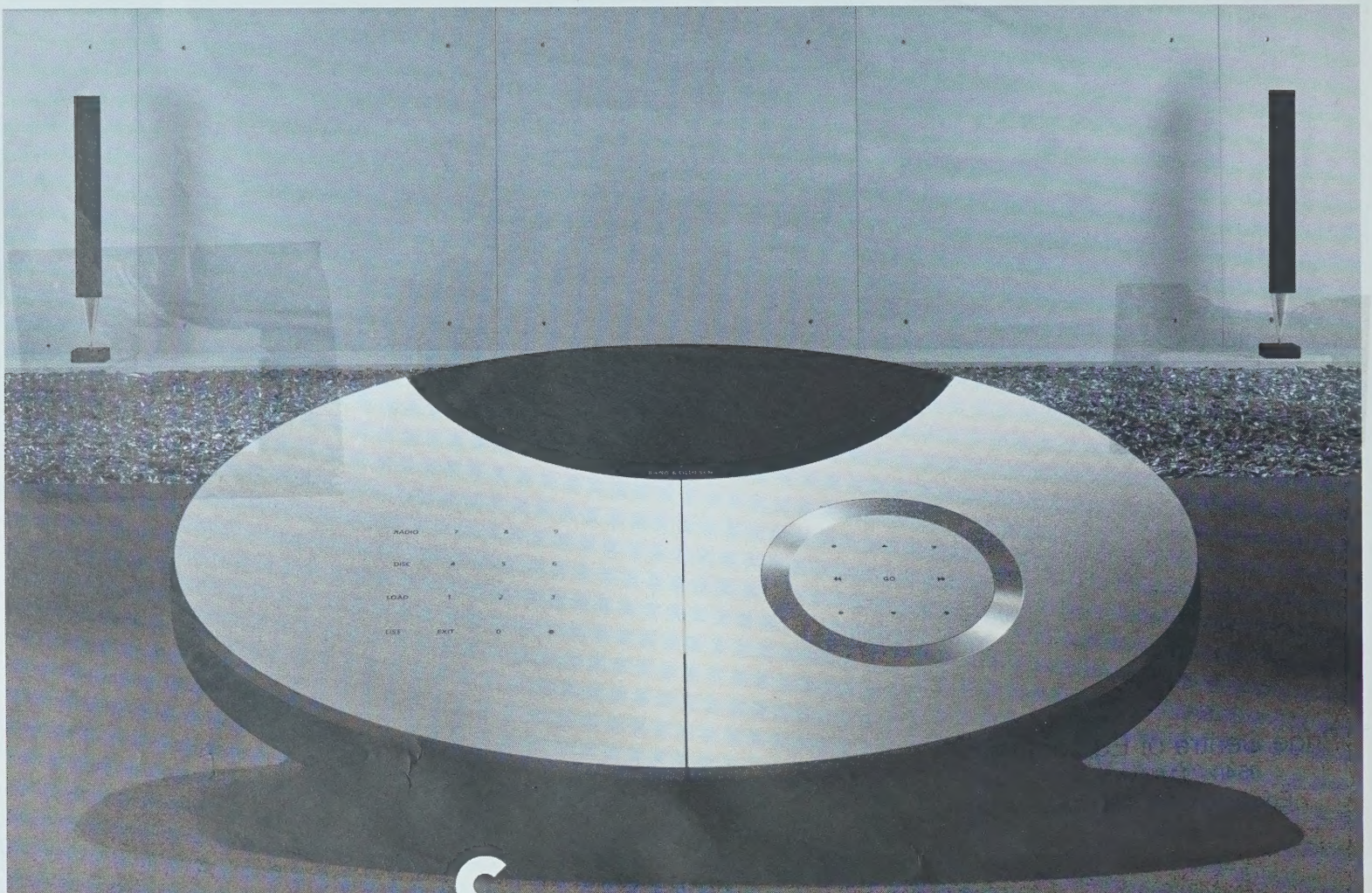

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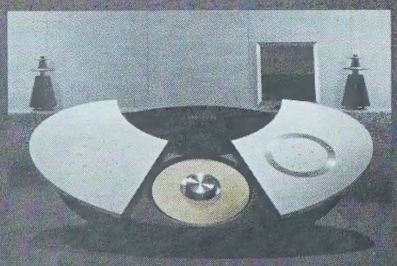

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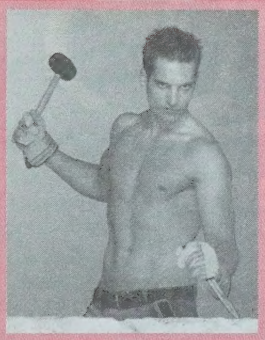
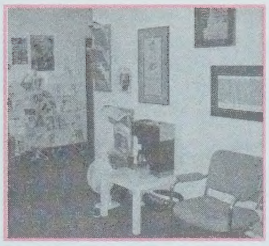


Taking Our Anniversary for Granite...

Bailey photographed on location at Urban Sky Studio by Patricio Del Rio. Model appears courtesy of IModel Management

what's where



GAY ABANDON?

If the GLCCE can't pull out of its nosedive, the community in Alberta's capital city won't just be *seeing* empty chairs, they'll be moving them out. David King reports. 24

LAYTON TENDENCIES?

With what seems to be *two* major right wing parties in Canada now, politicians and voters alike are exploring their progressive options. Is NDP as easy as ABC? *Outlooks* touches base with party leader Jack Layton to find out. 12

A VERY SPECIAL EVENT

Over the years, the Calgary Cares benefit has grown to become one of the city's most prominent fundraisers. Dale Smith lets us know what's in store for 2004. 14

EYE FOR DESIGN

Whether you look at it as a "guppie pond" or a chance to mingle with design greats (like Bruce Mau, creator of the picture-perfect space at right), the Toronto Interior Design Show was, by all accounts, a spectacular success. That it contributed to CANFAR makes that success all the sweeter. 28

March 2004

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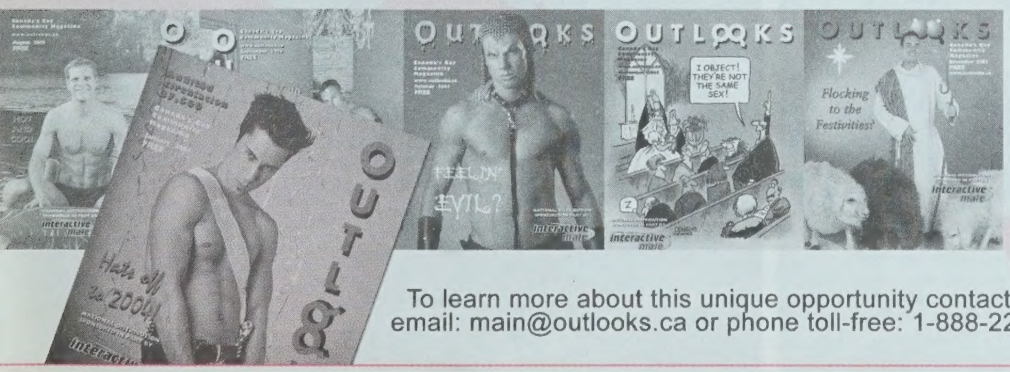

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LETTERS

Attention: *Outlooks*

It's found among many other free papers & mags, at the grand hall of the St. Lawrence Market (celebrating its 200th birthday). And we always pick up a copy there. Too bad it's not all that easy to find in the Toronto gay village, or Toronto period.

Two minor criticisms (graphically speaking only): please make your texts into three columns across instead of two. Each line is a bit long to read before dropping to the next (standard teaching in graphics classes). Also, your pics of various cities are interesting but one needs a magnifying glass to see any appreciable details.

Do continue your great pub, it's most informative. I'm sure it will help Toronto lesbians and gays to realize there's more to Canada than our neighbours in Montréal! (In 1968 I travelled to Vancouver on the C.P.R. route—through Regina and Calgary, returning on C.N. route—via Edmonton & Saskatoon; I fell in love with Van and the west in general. I did the train thing again—both ways—in 1982. The view by train beats peering through the clouds in an aeroplane!)

Ken

Via e-mail

The Editor Responds:

Many thanks for your kind comments about our publication—it's always nice to receive feedback from a reader with such a keen (and obviously experienced!) eye. I'm sure you'll be happy to see that, as of our February 2004 issue, we have limited the number of photographs in our Out & About sections in order to increase their scale. This is a permanent change.

As for the two-column format, it is one we adopted in the fifth anniversary overhaul of the magazine. In the past five or so years, the more modern three- to three-and-a-half-inch, two-column page has become extremely popular in the publishing industry, and can be seen in such diverse publications as *Canadian House & Home*, *GQ* and *Vogue Hommes International*. We like it because it gives *Outlooks* a "cleaner", more streamlined look, particularly since other column structures can appear quite dense and "grey" on a material like newsprint when there are large blocks of text. Even though this change was made for the "long run", we will take your suggestion under advisement.

***Outlooks*' availability (or lack thereof) in the Toronto marketplace is rather a two-edged sword: on one hand, it's nice to know that the roughly 13,000 copies we deliver each month are picked up quickly; however, without magazines lingering on distribution racks, our profile in the city is not as high as it might be. We are currently seeking a way to remedy this situation to everyone's benefit.**

Finally, I agree wholeheartedly with your views on train travel—since my trip in the fall of 2003, I vowed to make use of this scenic (and relaxing) travel option wherever and whenever possible, and encourage others to do the same. Again, many thanks for your letter.

Dear *Outlooks*,

Hearty applause to David Crosson's response to the, quite frankly, hateful letter dumping on all of us in the GLBT community who don't buy into the "straight acting" imperative.

The great joy of our community always has been its great acceptance of diversity. It is one of the main reasons why we are such a source of great innovation in our overriding society. I, myself, have always been a rather effeminate (and aging) gay man—hence, I suppose, I would be an embarrassment to the writer. However, I have been out and fighting the struggle for gay rights for almost forty years. I wonder what he has contributed apart from backbiting.

I don't want to change my behaviour; he should consider changing *his*.

P. Larocque,

Ottawa

WE WANT YOUR LETTERS

Sign your name and include your address and phone number. All letters are subject to editing—and please, no more than 400 words. Write to:

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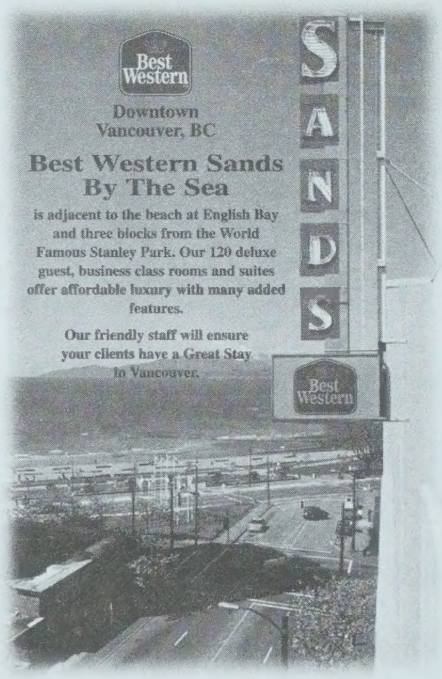

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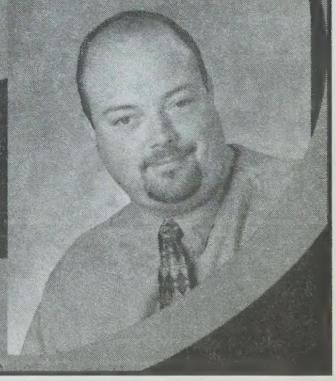

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"A nicer way of buying a car."

Many thanks...

By Roy Heale

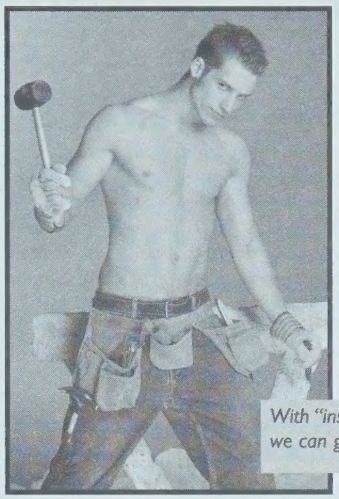
As we continue to pursue the goals we established back the early spring of 1997, it gives me great pleasure to report that this month marks the eighty-fifth issue of *Outlooks* magazine. As I reflect on this, our seventh anniversary, I can see just how much has changed in Canada's GLBT community since those early days, and how much we have grown along with these changes in an ongoing effort to unite and inform our community from coast-to-coast. Never before has it been so important for us to speak out and be heard on same-sex marriage and the many other key issues that will play a significant role in the looming federal election campaign. In the coming months, our views and opinions must be made known to all of Canada's elected representatives if we are truly going to move forward in the fight for equality.

Our role as a communications link, not only for the GLBT community but also to Canadians at-large, will continue in the future just as it has in the past seven years. Many mainstream readers, who look to us for the diverse stories and information contained in each issue, use *Outlooks* as their window onto the gay world, one through which they may learn more about our community. Our current audited circulation of 37,418 is the largest in our history and the Canadian Circulation Audit Bureau (CCAB) results lend official credibility to this number, which in the past has been doubted in some quarters. Based on our annual Reader Survey results, each copy of *Outlooks* is read by an average of 3.1 individuals, for a total readership of over 115,000 people each month. To each and every one of you we extend our sincere gratitude for your support and hope you continue to enjoy each edition we produce.

Over the course of our history, it has been important to give back to the community as we grow and develop. During the past seven years, we have donated over $250,000 in discounts to community groups with our non-profit advertising rates, as well as free publicity to promote community activities. Since its inception in 2000, the Outlooks Millennium Community Foundation has donated almost $10,000 in cash to emerging community groups and AIDS-related causes. We anticipate that this level of community support will continue to grow and flourish in the future.

As a major source of *Outlooks*' income, the advertisers who have supported our efforts deserve a sincere thank you for enabling us to continue to publish each month. In this issue, you can see a diverse representation of national advertisers from all regions across Canada, businesses and organizations who share and encourage our vision from Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia (too name only a few key areas), as well as many others from south of the border and even Mexico. All of these people contribute greatly to the growing success of our publication and we thank them all for their past support, not to mention the advertising assistance we anticipate in the years to come.

I'd also like to extend a special thank you for the invaluable efforts of the ever-expanding team of writers, photographers, design and layout people, models, sales staff, editors, guest columnists and all others involved in producing this monthly publication. Although everyone involved is paid an honorarium for their contributions, more often than not their labours go far beyond the financial rewards. This loyal team of workers makes each issue possible for your reading enjoyment.

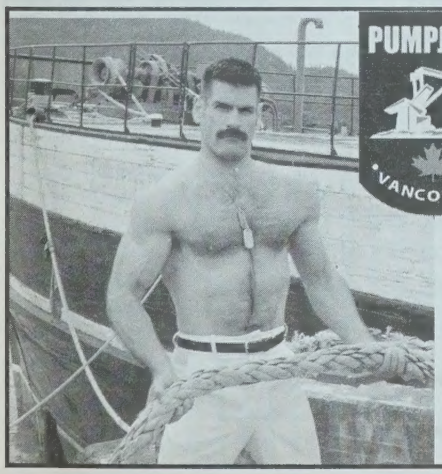


With "inspiration" like this we can go for years!

On behalf of everyone at *Outlooks*, I would like to thank you, the readers, for your ongoing support and patronage of our advertisers. We look forward to our eighth year of publishing and hope you will join us as we keep "chipping away" at not only our own future, but also part of the future of equality in Canada's GLBT community. ▼

Publisher's Note:

On Friday February 13th, 2004, we received a call from the Prime Minister's office on Parliament Hill thanking us for the huge amount of pink roses sent to The Right and Honourable Paul Martin. This symbol of gay love was probably the brightest moment of a week that focused on scandal and misuse of public tax dollars. We thank all of our readers who took the time and invested the money to make this statement to Prime Minister Martin. It did not go unnoticed!



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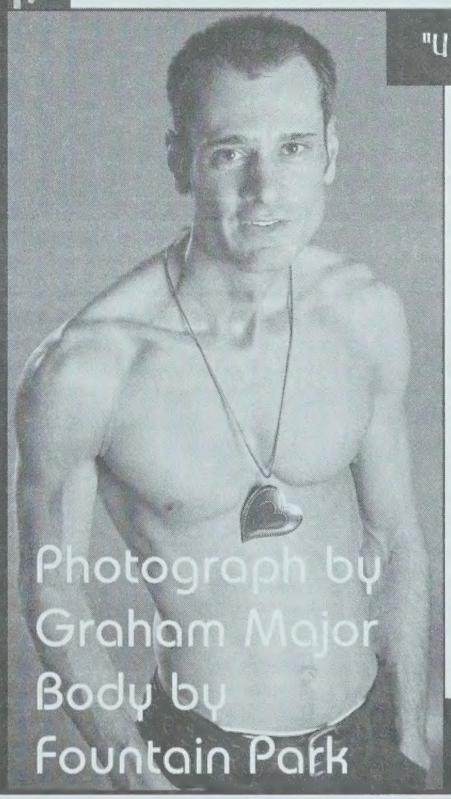

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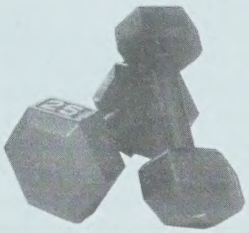

BRING THIS AD IN FOR 2 FREE WEEKS

Moving gaily forward

By David Crosson

A couple of days into 2004, on a bitterly cold Sunday afternoon, a few of us holed up at publisher Heale's house for a mini editorial retreat. Well-stocked with bizarre and delicious cheeses, wild boar paté and a "cuddly" Merlot (we could easily have been writing a book on how to build and maintain a matronly physique), the group of us settled in to review the latest round of reader surveys gathered in the fall. We had, of course, run over the submissions in a less intense fashion earlier, in order to run the reader profile information in our December 2003 issue. This particular session was dedicated to looking at the "bigger picture" of reader response, particularly where comments were concerned.

For the first time in our (now) seven-year history, the entire survey was available on our website and could be e-filed directly to outlooks.ca's webmaster. The decision to do this was a wise one, I think, as it not only streamlined the process for many people, it also helped us to see that we have two very distinct demographic groups within our readership. Not surprisingly we found that many, but not all, of our online respondents fell into the twenty-six to thirty-five age bracket, while those who submitted their responses in hard copy by post occupied the thirty-six to forty-five range. The split between the two was almost exactly fifty-fifty, an interesting ratio given the ease and accessibility of filling out the survey online.

Though some of the needs and wants of our readers differed (sometimes greatly) from age group to age group, in reading the comments submitted one thing became abundantly clear: from coast-to-coast people are finally "getting" what we're up to.

At that point in early January, with a fresh year and another anniversary ahead of us, it was encouraging to see that the vast majority of people were not only recognizing what we're working towards with this publication, but also encouraging it. This year's survey, I'm happy to report, resulted in the greatest number of truly national responses, with reader feedback submitted by people from all regions of the country— Victoria to St. John's and everywhere in-between.

As always, there were many requests for Outpost stories in cities not currently covered by our network of contributors, and rest assured we are working diligently at developing new markets throughout the country. On our wish list for Outpost cities to be added this year are: Victoria, Saskatoon, Regina, Ottawa, Halifax/Dartmouth, St. John's and Charlottetown. Given the size of some of these centres and the limitations of editorial space, we know that these newer Outposts could not run on a monthly basis in every issue. However, if you think you or someone you know might be able to help us out with reports from these cities on even a quarterly basis, please contact me directly by e-mail at editor@outlooks.ca. Please be sure to provide one or two unedited samples of your writing, along with a query letter, should you decide to "step up to the plate".

Based on some of the responses we received this past survey season, I am pleased to announce two new features that will help showcase the high-calibre creative talent that exists in Canada's GLBT community: "Focus" and "Framed". Focus will turn the spotlight on photographers both established and emerging, while Framed will feature the work of Canadian artists in a variety of media. Our first Focus layout, located on page 29 of this issue, features the work of Calgary-based Sarith Dy. Be sure to keep an eye open for both of these new items in future issues of *Outlooks*, as well as Don't You Wish submissions from across the country (check out our Halifax guy on page 30) and increased editorial in the areas of food, fashion, sport, spirituality and creative writing.

For those of you with a hands-on interest in the last area I mentioned, please turn to page 26 to see how you can become involved with the second edition of our RSVP writing competition, which not only offers you a chance to get your work out into the public eye, but also a crack at a cash prize of CDN$1,000.

In closing, on behalf of everyone at *Outlooks*, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those readers who responded to our survey with such thorough and thoughtful feedback; we hope the changes that you see over the next year are to your liking. ▼

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Minority rules?

By John Coulbourn

Paul Martin, it appears, is currently hoisted on his own petard—and I, for one, am thoroughly enjoying the view.

Flash back to a mere month ago, when our newly annointed and boundlessly annoying prime minister was enjoying such a degree of popularity that he didn't have to worry his silly little head about the gay vote.

Or, at least, he thought he didn't, judging from his behaviour.

Instead, worried that it might become an election issue, he'd effectively put the same-sex marriage matter on the back burner by amending the questions before the Supreme Court, effectively ensuring that he could hide behind the claim that he couldn't comment on anything that was before the courts until he was safely elected to the office he now holds by inheritance.

Further, he'd decided, in his boundless wisdom, to appeal the court decision awarding survivor benefits to the partners of gays and lesbians who had the temerity to die before their government was forced to recognize their full citizenship, not to mention their surviving partners' humanity.

We in the gay community might have been able to forgive him for the first move, I suppose, particularly if he'd offered any sort of reassurance that the issue of same sex marriage had more than his barely grudging support, had it not been for the second.

Yup, that second was nothing short of a slap up along side the head to our community's widows and children, if you will, and, to many of us, it was the final straw.

But Martin wasn't worried.

If Canada's gay community didn't like it, well, tough noogies. We could move our vote anytime we liked and Martin was enjoying such a boundless plurality that he would get elected anyway. Martin was so mammothly unconcerned, in fact, that when the *Toronto Star* suggested that maybe the Liberal Party was wavering in its support of same-sex unions, Martin himself never even bothered to deny it.

Instead, he dispatched his henchman, Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham (who just happens to represent the largest gay riding in Canada), to do the denying for him.

Martin's decision to expand the questions before the Supreme Court was merely, Graham insisted, "...a means to educate and evolve public opinion," according to the good folks at the *Star*.

One month later, one wonders if Martin might be a little less cavalier about the gay vote if he had to do it all over again.

Faced with polls that suggest he'll be damn lucky to hold onto his job by heading up a minority government, I suspect that a loyal gay vote might be a lot more attractive to the man at the helm now.

It is, after all, precisely in tight situations like this, that the gay vote can suddenly become very, very important—and if you doubt it, simply ask Joe Clark.

And frankly, it's going to take a lot more than the word of a highly placed cabinet flunky to lure *this* gay vote back to the Liberal fold as long as Paul Martin is running the show.

What I'm looking for now is a liberal leader—and a prime minister—who is willing, even determined to lead and not merely follow instructions like some sort of hopped up parade marshal content to cleave to the route already set out for him.

What this whole issue of same-sex rights needs (and what it has needed all along) has been leadership—a strong voice that says simply and clearly that Canada is a nation of equals and we are not prepared to be anything less. And frankly Martin seems even less willing to speak out than Chrétien, contenting himself instead to wait to be guided by his back bench, by the courts, by everything it seems but a sense of fairness. You want to educate and evolve public opinion, Mr. Martin, speak out and don't leave it to the courts.

Until Martin wakes up, Jack Layton is looking mighty good to me, at least as a place to park my vote. For, while Layton may never be able to gather enough votes to become prime minister, he can, I believe, with the backing of the gay community get enough power to make a man of principal out of our lily-livered Mr. Martin by forcing him to do the right thing.

In the end, it looks to me like the only way to make a man out of Paul Martin is to put him in a minority government bed with Jack Layton—and you know, we're just the voters to do it. ▼

John Coulbourn is a native Albertan who lived for many years in Calgary. He now makes his home in Toronto, where he covers performing arts for the Toronto Sun.

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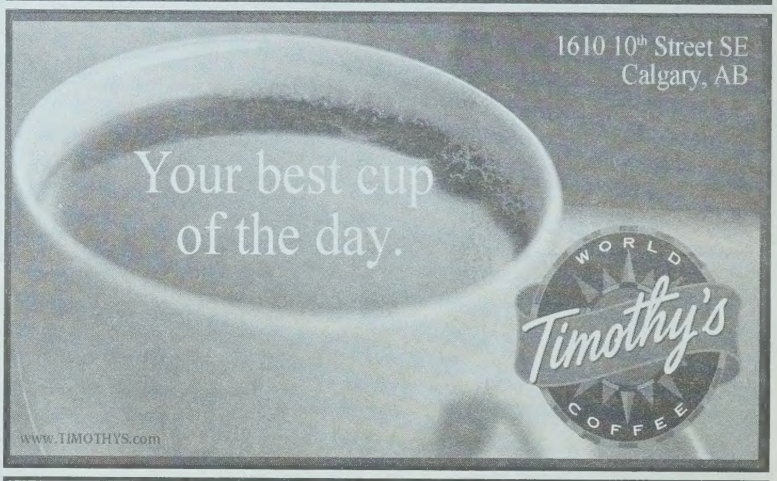

Politics in every direction

By Lorne Bradley Neudorf

When Members of Parliament jump from one party to another at a frenzied pace, it's clear that Canada's political face is undergoing a drastic change. Conservatives have abandoned their new party in favour of the Liberals, while Liberals are being openly courted by New Democrats. Several disillusioned MPs have quit their parties altogether to sit independently until the next election. Liberals are seen as becoming more conservative, New Democrats are appealing to left-of-centre voters and Conservatives are struggling to find their identity in the political spectrum. As Canadians head toward another federal election under a new prime minister, political parties are redefining themselves to offer a fresh perspective to the electorate.

Several factors can be credited as the mechanism of this considerable shift in federal politics. Most significantly, the change of leadership in the Liberal camp has resulted in a swift reaction by all political parties. Paul Martin has focused on contrasting his new government from that of his predecessor, Jean Chrétien. As the governing party realigns itself to follow a new direction, those in opposition naturally reassess their strengths and opportunities in an attempt to increase their appeal to voters. For instance, Martin's more conservative fiscal policies have caused the New Democrats to move closer to the former Liberal position, hoping to claim those Liberals unimpressed with these changes.

Martin's increasingly conservative direction presents a unique dilemma for the Conservative Party. As the Liberals take over more of the official opposition's fiscal policies, Conservative Party members must ask themselves a fundamental question: should they stay focused on their traditional policies with the danger of becoming irrelevant, or move further to the right and risk alienating progressives within the party? Ultimately, this question will be answered by party members when the new Conservative leader is selected in March.

Stephen Harper is seen as the candidate who will solidify the party's position on the far right. As the former leader of the Canadian Alliance, Harper would more than likely dishearten many former Progressive Conservative Party members. In contrast, Belinda Stronach is more moderate and may find her policies overlapping with those of the current government. Stronach's leadership would mean that no federal party would officially oppose same-sex marriage legislation. Tony Clement, the third leadership candidate, has offered creative ideas but it remains to be seen if his campaign can resonate with the membership base.

The last major opposition party has also found itself facing changes, but for different reasons. Recently considered in decay and without a clear purpose, the Bloc Québécois has suddenly surged in the polls due to Liberal Premier Jean Charest's unpopularity. The Liberals were hoping to increase the party's seat tally in Martin's backyard, but expectations have been lowered as the Bloc capitalizes on the association of the premier and prime minister.

Martin's aggressive leadership style is also stirring the political waters. While Chrétien took a "wait and see" approach on most issues, Martin tends to confront them head-on. This leadership style is more dynamic than stable and creates many opportunities for change in government policy and direction. When his party is maligned by reports of financial mismanagement, Martin speaks openly and frankly about his feelings. As a result of this, opposition parties have started operating in attack-mode, hoping to pin the prime minister. Conservative leadership candidates have made a competitive game of seeing who can deliver the most vicious attacks on the government. On the other end of the spectrum, the New Democratic Party website is overflowing with disparaging attacks on the prime minister. However, opposition parties should take caution at the potential fallout from negative campaigning. A platform of blame is generally unattractive to Canadians. It is easy to point fingers, but difficult to develop effective policies that offer voters a real choice.

Paul Martin's Liberals will run on a platform of economic success and the possibility of opportunity for Canada under a new prime minister. Liberals will certainly be forced to fend off opposition attacks on various issues; however, most political experts agree that the party will be returned to government in the next federal election. It will be interesting to see where the opposition forces finally settle on the political spectrum. Throw some unknown variables into the mix—as politics is sure to do—and we are about to experience a very exciting time in federal politics. ▼

Lorne Bradley Neudorf works for an international development organization, and is a Liberal nomination contestant in the federal riding of Calgary North Centre.

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The world premiere of Provenance took place at Theatre Network in Edmonton, Canada. Provenance is presented in association with John Lambert & Assoc.

OUTLOOKS

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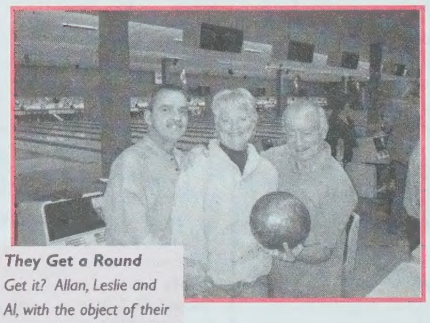
CALGARY out & about

IGBO FUNDRAISER
LET"S BOWL

Having a Ball...and Pins... and Special Shoes...
Flashing "strike quality" smiles at the camera are (from left) Gloria, Kat, Cora, Laura and Terry.

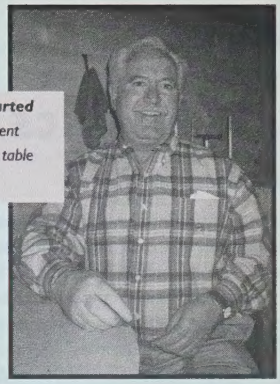
Slow Lane
Kevin, Lisa and Sandy take time out to rest between games.



They Get a Round
Get it? Allan, Leslie and Al, with the object of their affection.

Eye. Ball
Sandy gets ready to knock 'em dead... the pins, that is.

BESWICK HOUSE FUNDRAISER
MONEY-PENNIES



Sir Richard the Big-hearted
Dr. Richard Denney, the event organizer, works the ticket table for the auction

Rocker Chick
Financial sorceress Colleen Hanna with an auction item—who knew a lesbian would be so thrilled by knobs?!

What's Ware
Items for the raffle-style silent auction

CALGARY TATTOO & ART SHOW
THE WESTIN HOTEL

Down in Ink
Arthouse diva Sondra, ready for anything in her booth.

The Night Nurse?
Seven feet of "Florence Nightmare" action in the ballroom.

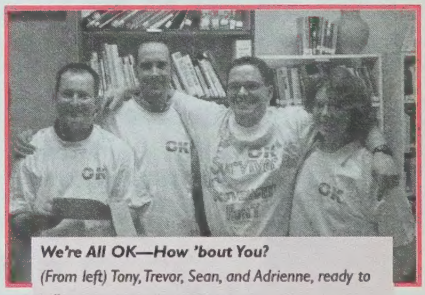
Maybe It Should Be Called the "Boobie Shop"
Barbie's Shop proprietor Barbie (natch) and pal Sarah, displaying their "wares".

VIGOR CHEQUE PRESENTATION
OUTLOOKS MILLENNIUM COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OFFICES

Once Again, with VIGOR...
OMCF Treasurer Colleen Hanna presents Jane Oxenbury with a $1,000 cheque to assist in promoting her same-sex domestic violence program.

GLCSA SCAVENGER HUNT
OLD 'Y' BUILDING

Look What—Or Who—I Found!
(Left) Kalyn and Michelle prepare to scavenge...



We're All OK—How 'bout You?
(From left) Tony, Trevor, Sean, and Adrienne, ready to roll...

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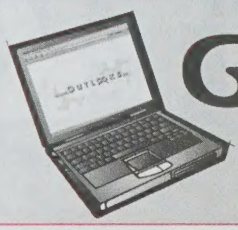
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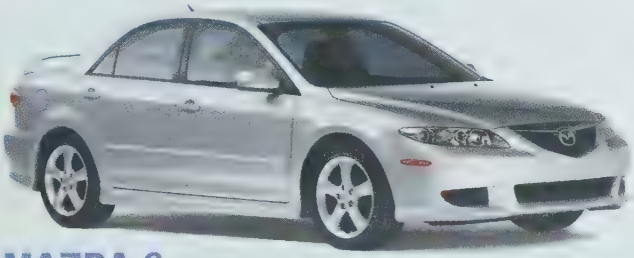

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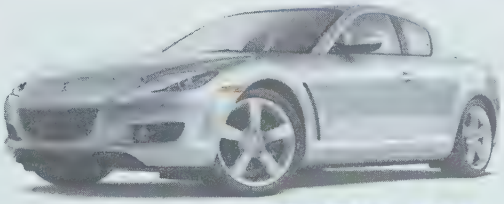

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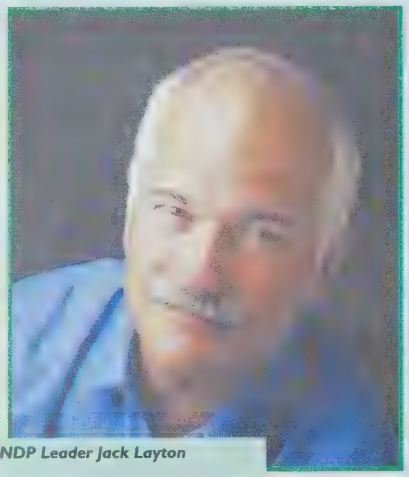
Getting a rise out of voters

By David Crosson

Even before he assumed his role as leader of the New Democrat Party, many people knew of Jack Layton's honest and unwavering support of Canada's GLBT community. In an exclusive 2003 interview, Layton told *Outlooks* that, were he in power, he would "move proactively to establish the full citizenship and opportunities for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and the transgendered". Always the party of the socially conscious, the NDP is enjoying more widespread support than ever before, particularly in light of the federal Liberals apparent move to the right and the sponsorship scandal that will likely haunt them for years to come. With a spring election looming—or possibly not—*Outlooks* caught up with Jack Layton to get his take on the current state of politics in Canada.



NDP Leader Jack Layton

Outlooks: I suppose there's no point now in crying over spent millions, so has the recent Liberal scandal been a boon to you in a way? Has it helped to strengthen the perception of the NDP as a viable political option?

Layton: Well, it's sad that such a scandal has happened in the first place, because it diminishes our political system as a whole and diverts us from all the issues that people need to have addressed. Whether it's healthcare or the environment or investing in our cities, all these things take a back seat because of this mess. Secondly, I think it just shows Canadians that the Liberal Party has become so enmeshed with its corporate buddies that it can't distinguish the public good from the private benefits anymore. And that tends to be what happens when you've been around for so many terms. I think it's time for them to be held accountable; I mean, we've *seen* this sort of practice. We saw it with Mulroney and then it segued right into the Martin-Chrétien era—when [Martin] was finance minister for a decade—right on through into his role now as prime minister. I think there's a door opening up here, and people are going to say "Blow some fresh air into this place—let's clean house!" I think that's why people are turning to us more and more.

Outlooks: I understand that with the Liberals moving more towards the right, there has been a groundswell of support for the NDP, particularly in British Columbia and Ontario—how are you handling this sudden, and some might say reactionary, increase in popularity?

Layton: First of all, we're welcoming it! People are certainly coming in increasing numbers to ndp.ca and joining the party, which is great. We now have up to 100,000 members, which is double what we were when the leadership started out. It's a growing movement and that's a terrific thing. Secondly, we're finding that support is not just increasing in B.C. and Ontario, but we're at a really good level in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and, if I may say so, in Alberta! In Québec, we're finally being recognized; the NDP was virtually non-existent in Québec for three elections and so it's been a rebuilding process. More recent polls have shown us in double digits there—ten or eleven percent—which we haven't seen since the Ed Broadbent days. And, of course, Ed Broadbent coming back to be a part of our team is great; I'm really thrilled that he accepted my invitation because he's a highly respected Canadian statesman. To have him back on board is really helping. We have all kinds of younger candidates, too; it's not just the elder statespeople but there's all kinds of new energy and enthusiasm as well.

Outlooks: Much has been made of potential Liberal jumps to the NDP—Sheila Copps being the subject of much speculation, for one. Also, Hedy Fry is being challenged in her riding of Vancouver Centre, and I know there's a very strong connection between Svend Robinson and her, particularly on the issue of same-sex marriage. Do you think that the Liberal Party is no longer as liberal as some of these key players would like it to be?

Layton: Well, the Liberal Party has really taken quite a sharp turn to the right under Martin. He's purged, one way or another, some of the slightly more progressive voices that were there in the former cabinet, for instance. His first announcements were "Let's do missile defense/Star Wars with Bush" and "Let's come through with a corporate tax cut—in the billions of dollars—for our friends". *These* were his first choices. It's a very conservative agenda and I have been saying that we essentially have a conservative heading up the Liberal Party. The table is set now for a progressive alternative to be out there. Of course, the Conservatives dropped the word "progressive"; they don't want to be thought of as progressive at all. They also seem to be looking to bring a CEO in to run their company/party—Belinda Stronach—and so you'll have two CEOs running for prime minister, and we'll be the party that *isn't* putting forth a CEO to be prime minister! We'll be offering someone with some community roots—maybe that'll be attractive to people. [Laughs]

Outlooks: Do you think that the Conservative Party is a viable option now, given the disillusionment people have with the federal Liberals?

Layton: Oh, I think it's too conservative, to some degree. But it's also a party that's so close to the Martin Liberals in policy that I suppose they'll try to portray themselves as the party that's *not* caught up with scandal. You can have the same policies without the scandal by going over to the Tories. We actually think we should have *different* policies altogether, rather than just being the "scandal-free right-wing party"! Besides, does anyone think they'll be much different? Has everyone forgotten Brian Mulroney already? This new united Conservative Party is not even back to the level of the Progressive Conservatives and the Alliance when they were separate! Our hope is to really present a genuine alternative to the issues, particularly on some of the social, economic and environmental issues. We're the party that's very clear on same-sex marriage, very clear on issues relevant to war and peace, clear on corporate tax cuts and healthcare funding and so on. I think people are going to have a real choice this time and I'm very excited about candidates that are coming together—we're getting some really high-calibre people coming forward and that's going to help, too.

Outlooks: Do you think in a democracy that cultural mores should be a matter of majority rules?

Layton: Well, we fought hard to have a vote in the House of Commons on the [then-Alliance] Conservative Party motion to define marriage as only between a man and a woman. It lost on a tie vote, which I thought was very powerful. I was very proud that our party took the position that, because it was a human rights issue, it was an issue of principle. All of our party members in the house were asked not to oppose our position—even though there's been some division in the past—and sure enough, the members who went in voted the correct way and the couple of members who were concerned stayed out. The result was that we ended up with a tie vote—which is just the beginning. I know that as we recruit more and more good candidates and win more seats things will evolve. Everybody knows where our party stands, and all the candidates on the team now are people who support same-sex marriage. We will have a lot more seats in the House of Commons in the next election—who knows how many more, but lots.

Outlooks: Do you think the Liberals are heading towards a minority government?

Layton: You know, it's way too early to say because things are in such flux right now. We're steadily rising—a point or so every month. If we keep this pace up we could be in government within about a year [Laughs], so we're try to be prepared for that by laying out good programs and policy ideas for people to consider. They seem, by and large, to be reacting in a positive way.

Outlooks: There's some question as to when an election will be called—do you think a later election would be beneficial based on the NDP's growth right now?

Layton (centre) with his wife and Svend Robinson at Toronto Pride 2003

Layton: I don't think so, because we want that election to happen *soon*. We're ready for it, our candidates are coming into place and we think the Canadian people want to vote on Paul Martin and the Liberals—I think they have some strong opinions on them right now! [Laughs] I'd like to see it happen soon, and I'd also like to see a full exposé of all the scandal business with the sponsorship program—but that should be done quickly. It shouldn't drag out—I read in *Le Devoir* that it could take up to a year and that would be terrible.

Outlooks: Do you have a message like to send to all the GLBT people who have previously voted Liberal?

Layton: Well, the first thing is that their party is abandoning them. Real liberals in the Liberal Party are being abandoned by Paul Martin's corporate drift away from Canadian values, which is that we deal with things as a community; we're not just a bunch of individuals and businesses functioning in an economy. We function in communities, so it's time to invest in those communities. We had ten years of a government telling us we can't build things, that we can only dismantle, take apart, downsize and privatize. I just feel there's a strong impulse beginning to develop. I know a lot of people who voted Liberal in the past that feel this way. We're inviting them to come and join us. I also feel very strongly about Canadian sovereignty in the context of our trade deals; we've just been buffeted by these Bush trade policies and we think that's got to change. And let's put the brakes on this tax cut to the corporate sector and well-to-do. Let's start investing in our school systems, our colleges and universities, where students have these huge debts. Let's invest in our cities—whether its public transit, affordable housing, environmental infrastructure, child care centres—we've got to get those investments on the go. I think there's a real excitement among Canadians about what we can build together. ▼

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Message from Minister Gene Zwozdesky

As Minister of Alberta Community Development, I extend my congratulations to *Outlooks*. For the past seven years, your magazine has distinguished itself as a valuable forum for news, entertainment and information of interest to the gay and lesbian community.

The success of your magazine is a testament to the hard work and talent that are invested into its publication, and one has only to look at your national circulation to see your impact and reach across the country. Through your commitment and your creativity, you have developed a magazine that has become an important information source for many people in Alberta and across Canada—congratulations!

Please accept my best wishes on this milestone, and for continued success in your publication endeavours.

Gene Zwozdesky

Gene Zwozdesky
Minister of Community Development

229 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6
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Printed on recycled paper

Celebrating Seasons

By Dale Smith

On a darkened stage, the show begins. Dancers appear, their costumes bright; the music pounds and the energy is electric. The show is incredible. Add to that the cocktail and food stations set up around the various levels of the lobby of the Jack Singer concert hall and suddenly it's the best night out you've had in months.

Welcome to Calgary Cares.

Every year, AIDS Calgary hosts this, their largest benefit and the most creative and outrageous gala event in town. In fact, for the past three years in a row, the readers of *FFWD* magazine have rated it the number-one fundraising event in Calgary. This past spring, the 2002 show was recognized at the Canadian Events Industry Awards Gala in Toronto as the "Best Event for a Charitable Organization in Canada"—no small feat. In January of this year, the 2003 show was awarded the "Best Theatrical Entertainment Production Worldwide", beating out hundreds of other nominees from around the globe, officially making Calgary Cares the most outrageous and fantastic event in the world among the competition.

The theme of this year's event, to be held on March 27th, is "Seasons"—and we can expect great things from the event organizers. Jocelyn Flanagan, from E=MC2 Event Management, is the Production Chair of Calgary Cares. It's her job to see that the stage show goes off without a hitch, and she promises a great show.

"As always, it's the fusion of dance and fashion," she says, "a lot of high-energy." This year's show will feature a live vocalist as well. "It's playing with the senses, and it's playing with the emotions. The sights, the smells and the sounds of each season." Without giving too much away, she promises everything from umbrellas and bare feet to Ice Queens and Chinooks.

Volunteers are another integral part of the show's success, and last year saw around 300 volunteers at the event. This year, organizers are trying to downsize to approximately 200 (not including dancers and models) by using existing volunteers more efficiently in order to leave more room for patrons to party after the show. While they are expecting about seventy-five dancers and models on stage, about fifty volunteers will manage the front of the house. Backstage, counting stage hands, stylists, costumers and makeup artists, the number comes close to one hundred and fifty "invisible" volunteers that help the show go on.

Rosy Ly, owner of downtown Calgary's Evolution Hair Studio, was one of the stylists who helped with last year's models. "It was so much fun," she recalls. "You get to meet all types of people, and learn new things from a fashion aspect." She remembers starting the day very early, and partying at the event well into the night. "It was a lot of work," she said. "But it's really rewarding when you get to see it all on stage."

Red-hot action: a glimpse of Calgary Cares 2003

The Event Group's Jim Button is the Event Chair of Calgary Cares. He is there to ensure the entire night runs smoothly, especially the food and drink aspects of the event. He tells us that this year, event-goers can expect a few changes.

"One of the big differences that we're going to do this year is that Sorrenti's is going to do *all* the food. One of the big challenges that we've always had with this event is that it gets so crowded, resulting in long line-ups. What Sorrenti's has offered to do is create four stations with an additional fifteen volunteers serving trays of food."

This year they also plan to institute a drink ticket system in order to reduce the waste that they encountered in previous years, which resulted in alcohol running out. When cleaning up, they often found many three-quarters-full drinks abandoned. They're hoping that this new system will help people to become a little more responsible and will allow them to stretch their supply further. All of the alcohol is donated, and if it runs out before the evening's close it can be a painful scenario. Button says that all attendees will receive five drink tickets to start, and that any drink afterwards will cost a toonie.

Sponsorship is another challenge that Button deals with. For a show that has won so many awards and has such international recognition, he is amazed that corporate sponsorship hasn't increased incrementally. As usual, the core sponsors remain MAC, Smed International and Trojan, with drink sponsors Big Rock, Canyon Road and Bacardi. This year, American Airlines donated four flights as prizes to be bid upon in the silent auction. As well, the event receives a great deal of media support. Ambush Advertising Group is a big supporter, developing all of the event's marketing materials.

Button is keen to point out that this is one of those wild and edgy events that pushes the limits of acceptability in conservative Calgary. "We're really happy about the fact that we'll make this the most cosmopolitan event in town. We know we pushed the envelope last year, and we'll do it again this year in a different way and that's an exciting thing for us."

Flanagan echoes Button's sentiments when she tells us that the stage show will be pushing the envelope—with fewer clothes!

Last year's event raised nearly $180,000; this year, organizers are hoping to top that amount. Calgary Cares is AIDS Calgary's largest benefit all year, helping them fund all of their programs. Katherine Morton, outgoing Director of Communications and Development for AIDS Calgary, points out that all monies raised at this event stay within the community. In addition to funding prevention education, the funds go to help all people in Calgary living with HIV/AIDS—including people living on the street, gay men, straight women and the aboriginal community.

Both Morton and Button want people to be aware of the ticket programs that Calgary Cares is running. They are offering a special incentive on group tickets, where people who sell ten tickets receive an eleventh free. Morton also asks that people bring money to the event for more fundraising opportunities, including the silent auction, where there are many fantastic prizes up for grabs.

The event sells out yearly, so organizers advise buying tickets in advance. For more information on either group or individual tickets, contact AIDS Calgary at (403) 508-2500, or the Calgary Cares hotline at (403) 541-9255. ▼

Dale Smith is a freelance writer in Calgary. His work has previously appeared in XY Magazine, and Outlooks' RSVP competition

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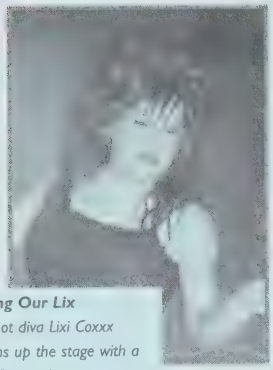
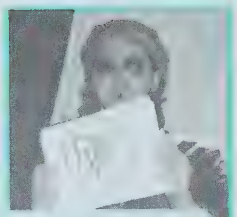


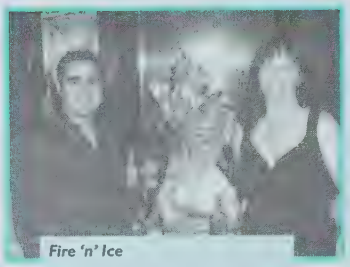
Taking Our Lix
Red-hot diva Lixi Coxxx steams up the stage with a Tina Turner classic



Ray Banned, Banned?
Ray was having girlfriend issues—but what would a day of sunshine be without Ray?

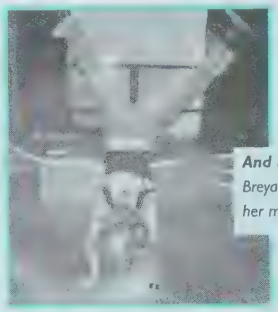
GRAND OPENING

CLUB DESIRE

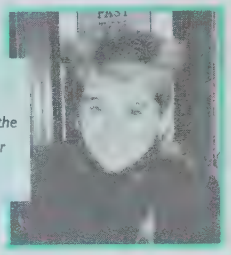


Fire 'n' Ice
Sam and Beverly should watch out for that ice sculpture melting from all the heat the club has generated in the community.

Municipal Red Tape?
Nope—and more fun than a budget cut. Mayor Glen Murray (second from right) helps the owners and managers launch their new venture



And Brought to You By the Letter Y
Breyanna Burlesue dazzles her crowd with her mastery of the alphabet.



Watch It, Pal—I'm Dangerous!
Dani puts a friendly face on the issue of door security with her mega-watt smile.

FASHION SHOW

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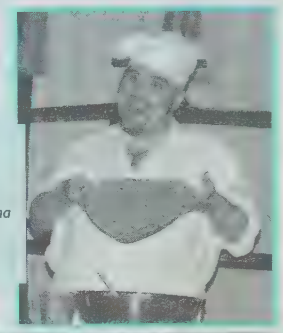
An Impressive Bust
Basket, too, apparently! A buxom model is taken into custody—it seems that crime does pay sometimes!

SINFUL INDULGENCES SHOW

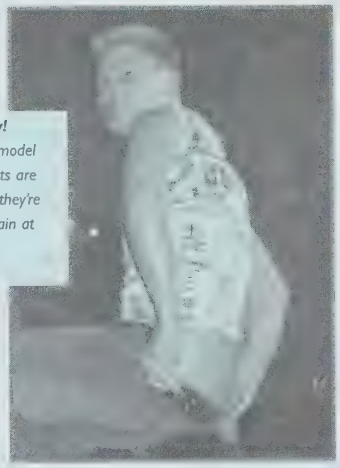
GIO'S



Warm Heart?
Jiminy Lickit displays a sweet treat made with—among other ingredients—you, me, a little Martha Stewart and some prison bars. It was a good thing.

Well, It's a Dirty Shade of White
The divine Phil Thee shows us all how to be a perfect angel... Wait—that's no fun!

Crop, In the Name of Love
Sam gets a quick hug from one of the models at the end of a very successful show.



Cheeky Monkey!
A price-conscious model shows us that pants are even better when they're "half-off". A bargain at any price!

Cast Out
A bevy of Valentine red hots, post-performance.

Planning an event in Winnipeg? Contact Brent at (204) 789-9215 and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. All photos by Brent Y.

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In Loving Memory

John H. Dort Jr.

June 27, 1955

to

March 17th 1996

Look well all those who love all lovely things, the hour is, but the hour has wings.

HOROSCOPES

Mellow vibes will guide our every move this March when a Pride parade of Piscean planets will flow, ebb and pulsate through the cosmos. Are you coming out like a lion or a lamb? All bets will be off when Jupiter makes your every move a blockbuster. March forth and keep 'em guessing, sweetheart.

There are very few times when anyone can tell a proud Ram what to do. Okay, let's face it; there are no times! This March will be no exception to the rule as a cluster of personal planets in Pisces will oppose Jupiter—all Wilde, intuitive ideas about what will work best on the job will go kerplunk like a lead balloon. Early retirement anyone? Well, how about unemployment?

March has the potential to shape up to be a dandy month, at least as far as all these delusional planets in Pisces are concerned. Queer Bulls will be surrounded by jolly pals who appear to be ready for everything and anything. Party on, compadre, and use the time well. At the rate you'll be going, by April you could be a dissipated stale rag! That is, if you're lucky.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

You envision yourself sitting in your executive suite, feet up on the desk and bossing undeserving underlings around. This daydream will soon to be over, pink Twin. You'll begin to question all facets of your life this March and, by the 31st, you'll be happy to mull your fate from the comfort of your living room couch. Missing the corporate boat? Nevermind. Who wants to paddle upstream anyway?

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Pink Crabs will have the "gift of glib" when planets in Pisces jostle Jupiter throughout March. You'll charm just about anyone and find a way of making your point to prod any international issue. Anyone we know? But before you go around the world in eighty ways, be sure that your advertising message delivers on the promise. Is there truth in advertising? Oh, c'mon—let's try!

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

Proud Lions have a reputation for extravagance and generosity. Good thing too; March will have you spending to the hilt as you dip into various pools of resources to get the ball rolling. A plethora of planets in Pisces will oppose Jupiter through the month and unleash a wave of great need that has to be sated no matter who foots the bill. Does money buy happiness? You bet it does!

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Who has that aura? That supernova? That shining light around which all lesser planets orbit? It's hard to believe that we're talking about *you*, gay Virgo, but we are. At least that's what we will continue to believe until all these personal planets in Pisces move on mid-month and return you to that "sensible shoe" state that is your wont. Don't you 'wont' more?!

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

If all these planets in Pisces will teach you anything this March, it will be to find harmony, balance and satisfaction in your work. Jupiter will chaff at the thought that most of your waking day is spent on useless, mind-numbing tasks. Don't be resigned to playing the lackey to every Scrooge who deigns to hand over a paycheque. You deserve more than a "tiny tim" at the end of the day.

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

We have uncovered evidence that proud Scorps are capable of a rollicking good time this March. You'll seem to know intuitively what will spark the party scene. Many planets in Pisces will conspire to lead you into delicious temptation with a motley crew of pals, acquaintances and assorted hangers-on. What mischief will you manage to create? Should we dust you for fingerprints?

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

What happens when your home life obligations oppose those of your career? Expect to find out when planets in Pisces form an opposition to Jupiter through March. Gay Archers will feel pulled in two directions and may be forced to make some difficult decisions and compromises. It may be necessary to step off the fast track and bolster your foundation to avoid being roadkill.

CAPRICORN

March will be the month to make yourself heard loud and queer. Pink Caps are often too politically astute to call it as they see it and it is rare that they feel free to express their honest, uncut opinion. But the combination of otherworldly Piscean energy and Jupiter pluck will move you into a new level of awareness and give you a certain amount of protection. Wear plastic, just in case.

Cool Aqueerians will feel a heated surge this March as a troop of planets in Pisces will converge with robust Jupiter. You'll be lucky in love, at least for the next four weeks, and will be tempted to revamp your entire world to keep the flame stoked. But remember that Pisces is dreamy, creamy and none-too-practical in affairs of the heart. Budget your emotions as well as your funds.

Life will be all about you this March as a gaggle of Piscean planets stirs up your world and makes you feel like a star. Okay, maybe a *short-term* celebrity, but why quibble? Guppies can bask in the limelight and net more than a few admirers; by the end of this birthday month you may decide on one particular catch. Lucky Jupiter anticipates a June wedding...

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An "Out There" concept

By Peter Carlyle-Gordge

Gay men and lesbians bored or fed up with the bar scene often complain they have no healthy places to meet and socialize, but that certainly isn't true in Winnipeg, where sporting groups thrive. You don't have to be a keen, competitive sports type either. Back in July of 2002, a group of concerned gay men and lesbians decided they needed a place to meet up for healthy recreation and sports. The upshot was creation of a website known as Out There Sports and Recreation.

Floor hockey action made possible, in part, by the Out There Sports and Recreation website

The site is constantly updated and is a place where anyone with an interest in any activity from curling and cross country skiing to touch football and floor hockey can advertise their interest and find like-minded people who want to get together. The information is sent to a wide e-mail list and those concerned can get in touch with others to arrange meetings and events.

One of the website founders is CBC Radio technician Jeff Malcovish, a keen floor hockey player. "A lot of people are into athletics and recreation but there was no central place where they could hook up and get organized," he says. "In the past you had to run a print ad if you wanted to find like-minded people, but the Internet is the perfect answer. The website is a clearing house for many sports and we have a growing e-mail list of people who want to be kept informed."

Malcovish stresses that the website founders do not actually organize sports events, but provide a forum where people can make contact. They then have to make their own arrangements, publicizing them through the website. The contact list is now close to 200 and new interests are constantly cropping up, including volleyball, ping pong, wall climbing, tennis, canoeing, hiking and snowboarding.

Malcovish, a former bike racer, started his own floor hockey group by simply e-mailing a lot of his friends. "You need fourteen to eighteen people to create a game with two teams and we have a pool of about thirty," he says. "Some can't show up every week, but overall it's worked out quite well."

Ryan Shultz and Margerit Roger were also pioneers in getting the sports site going. Roger, a mother of two twelve-year-olds, loves hiking in summer and cross-country skiing in winter. She says you needn't be a fit, sports fanatic to find something of interest and is quite clear that sporting groups aren't a place to cruise and pick up partners.

"It's a good place to socialize and meet new friends who share similar interests," she says. "We have a lot of fun and nothing is high pressure. To come hiking with us you don't need fancy equipment or the most expensive hiking boots."

Roger says there has been a nice balance between males and females on their hiking trips and she usually takes her son and daughter on the outings. She thinks it's socially healthy for her son and daughter to be exposed to gay men and lesbians and to see that they're just normal people like anyone else. She also thinks it's especially good for her son to have some male presence his life.

"We're definitely not jocks and we have a lot of fun and are socially supportive of each other," she says. "It's great to meet like-minded people who enjoy the same things and it's also great to be able to be totally out and not have to hide who you are, which you might do in a regular hiking group."

Roger says their hikes usually last two to three hours, but they have frequent rest stops, so you don't have to be an athlete in tiptop shape to join in. Hikes have taken place so far in the Carberry desert area of Manitoba, around Pinawa, Manitoba, and in the Lake of the Woods district on the Manitoba/Ontario borders.

"Usually we meet at a doughnut shop and we pool into a couple of cars to save on the gas," she says. "It's a great way to get exercise and meet friendly people from all walks of life while having fun."

She also notes that in a bar scene people often talk at a superficial level, whereas on long walks people chat about much more significant things, such as coming out experiences. For single parents it's also a great way to educate children and overcome any kind of homophobia they may run into in school or in a wider society.

The Out There website has a consolidated mailing list made up of all those provided by separate sports and recreation groups. Anyone can subscribe or unsubscribe and can post their own messages direct to the mailing list without first having to go to the owner of the list. Replies to any message go back to the original poster of a message and not to the entire mailing list. In that way, people can spontaneously organize their own events without having to get the list owner to post a message for them.

The site also has links to other Canadian GLBT sports websites, including the Ottawa Gay Hockey Association, Apollo Calgary, the Gay and Lesbian Tennis Alliance and Q-Crew—Toronto's Gay and Lesbian Rowing Team.

Those interested in finding out more about this health-minded socializing can find the Out There website and its links at: **www.gaycanada.com/outthere/** ▼

Peter Carlyle-Gordge is a former Manitoba correspondent for Maclean's and The Financial Post. He has written for most major magazines and newspapers in Canada as well as broadcasting on the national and international networks of CBC Radio.

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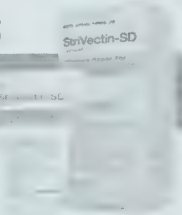

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P.E.I. out & about

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The Very Picture of Love
Grant and Danny flash their pearly whites—you'll have to guess what they did right after...!

Oh—Ya Got Me!
Jayme seems taken aback by the camera's flash—perhaps she needs a crash course in coping with the paparazzi.

Stringing Us Along
John livens things up with a bit of pickin' and grinin'

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All photos by Jim Culbert-PEI.

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Message from His Worship
Mayor Bill Smith

Congratulations to *Outlooks* magazine as you celebrate seven years of publishing success.

Since its early days as a small local publication, *Outlooks'* circulation has almost doubled. This is testimony to your great work and ability to capture and maintain a loyal readership.

On behalf of City Council and the citizens of Edmonton, I wish you all the best for continued success.

Yours truly,

Bill Smith
Mayor

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CALGARY
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DAVE BRONCONNIER MAYOR

A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR DAVE BRONCONNIER

Congratulations to the staff of *Outlooks* magazine on your seventh year of publishing in Canada's gay and lesbian community.

Each year, *Outlooks* grows as a credible and national voice for a community that has not traditionally had a balanced and honest presence in mainstream media.

I am proud to see a Calgary initiative grow to national prominence in such a short time. The success of *Outlooks* is a reflection of the hard work and talent of the magazine's staff and publisher, and hopefully, of Calgary's efforts to be a more tolerant and inclusive city.

I wish you many more years of growth and success.

Dave Bronconnier
MAYOR

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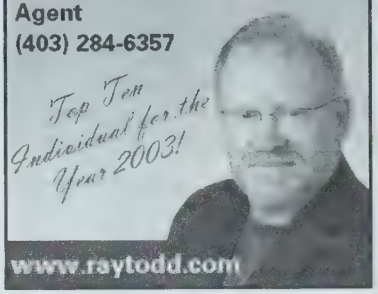

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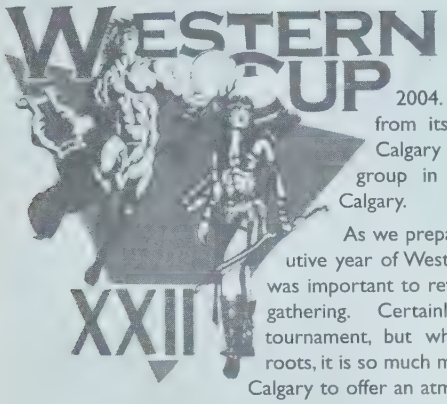
The cup gears up

By Thomas Henchel, Apollo



Apollo Calgary is pleased to present Western Cup XXII over the Easter Weekend, April 8-11, 2004. The event has come a long way from its inception in 1981, when Apollo Calgary extended an invitation to a similar group in Edmonton to play volleyball in Calgary.

As we prepare to gather for the 22nd consecutive year of Western Cup in Calgary, we thought it was important to reflect on the purpose of our annual gathering. Certainly it is a multi-sport invitational tournament, but when you consider Western Cup's roots, it is so much more. It has been the goal of Apollo Calgary to offer an atmosphere of fellowship and support through the media of sport and recreation.

As gays and lesbians from around North America gather each year, we do so in the spirit of diversity, healthy competition, good sportsmanship and respect for one another. In doing so, we help to build a stronger community, which happens to be the theme for this year's event.

It has been the goal of this year's organizing committee to freshen Western Cup's image and heighten awareness of the event. To this end, we now offer access to information through our website (**www.westerncup.com**), where you'll find information about the sporting events. We've also made it easy for participants to register online. As well, it is a great source of information about our social events, which include a special Friday night party. Join us for an evening of Sip, Sing N' Sin at Western Cup's Viva Las Vegas Night in the Westin Hotel. Here you'll be able to sip your favourite beverage in the piano lounge, demonstrate your singing abilities on the karaoke stage and sin at the gambling tables in our casino. Of course, it wouldn't be truly "Vegas" without a little wedding chapel for you to marry that special someone. Our social event roster also includes our signature soiree, the hottest dance of the season at our host hotel, The Westin Calgary.

Apollo is pleased to be working in conjunction with *Outlooks* in the promotion of this major event. We invite you to join us this Easter Weekend for an experience that will foster new friendships and give us all a chance to celebrate our stronger community. ▼

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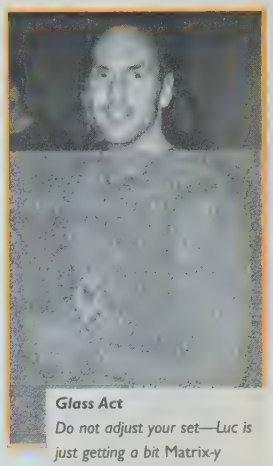
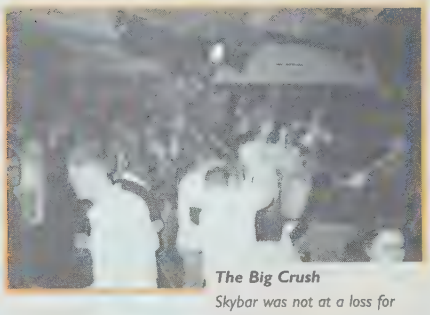
What Can I Say? I'm Very Cute!
That may not be what Brandon is saying, but we think it's obvious!

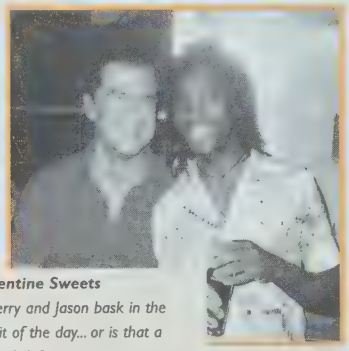
On Closer Examination...
It seems to be love. We won't disturb you boys...



Glass Act
Do not adjust your set—Luc is just getting a bit Matrix-y behind a pane of pebble glass.



The Big Crush
Skybar was not at a loss for revellers on the big jour d'amour



Valentine Sweets
Thierry and Jason bask in the spirit of the day... or is that a disco light?

Beedle-Dee-Dee-Dee, Two Ladies
The lovely Melanie and Julie, looking like they could fit right in with a glam production of Cabaret.

Adorable Works In Both Languages
Steve and Francis up close and personal at Skybar.

If Looks Could Kilt...
Pierre and Christian in a pair of breezy get-ups. Kinda makes me wish I'd seen Braveheart.

Planning an event in the Montreal?
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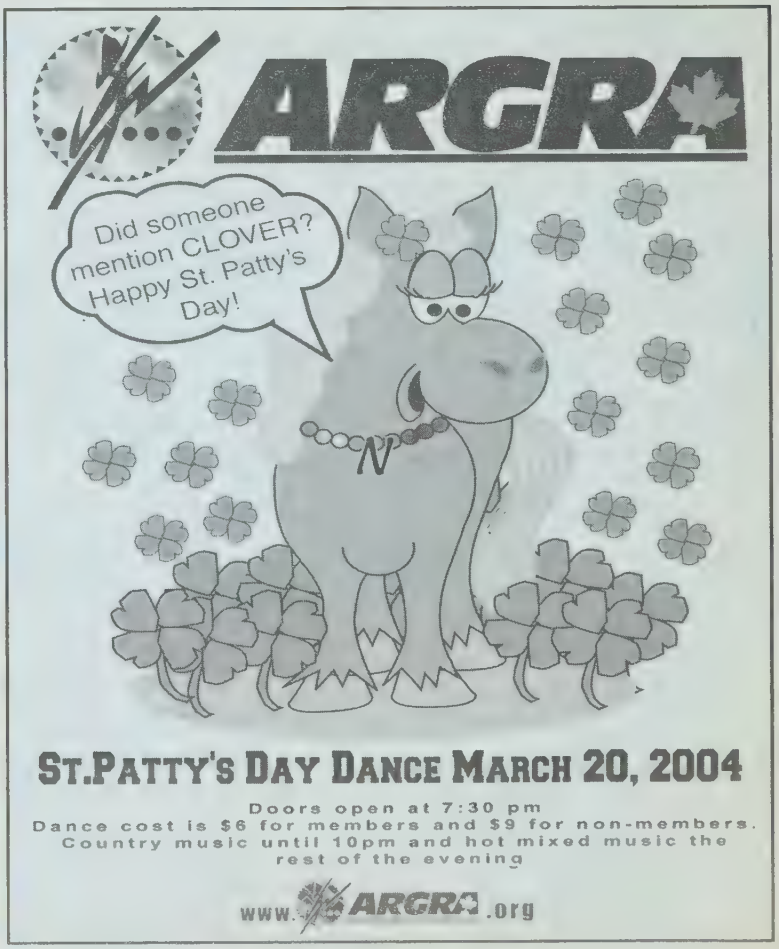
All photos by Brad Malmberg

What's Yer Pleasure?
Yves seems to have the best of both worlds, flanked as he is by Martine and Mario. Our vote is for Mario...



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Outlooks magazine:

These are very exciting and challenging times for those of us in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans communites in Canada. We have made huge strides on our journey towards full equality and liberation, but there is still work to be done *Outlooks* magazine has been an important national voice for our diverse communities. On behalf of my federal New Democrat colleagues and our national Leader Jack Layton, I want to congratulate you on seven years of publishing, and wish you continued success in the future.

Stay strong and loud and proud!

Yours in pride,

Svend Robinson

Svend Robinson, MP

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Community conundrum

By David King

If HIV Edmonton's near closure last month wasn't enough to test the instability of the city's non-profit groups, it seems another potential closure may be already in the works, this time affecting the entire GLBT community.

After decades of establishing itself as a voice for the community, the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton (GLCCE—known affectionately as "Glicky") is truly in critical condition. The symptoms are endless: a big nosedive in membership renewals, a shift from sporadic employment programs to volunteer-based staff, increasingly out-of-date services and a general malaise in volunteer participation at every turn. Community spirit soured further in December, when former co-chair Steve Rowan's death left the community huddled in grief.

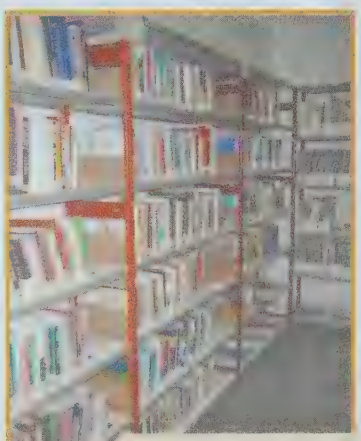
The culmination of all that vulnerability has generated an equally uncertain outcome for GLCCE before its Annual General Meeting on March 11, when remaining co-chair Roz Ostendorf will sit down with what's left of her board to determine GLCCE's future.

"GLCCE has been a small dedicated group that has devoted their time for years," says Ostendorf. "We are certainly at a crossroads—for whatever reason, volunteers have stopped doing what they were doing."

A co-chair now for three years, Ostendorf—as a proud new parent—is herself about to resign from GLCCE. In her view, past efforts have fizzled beyond repair and having little resources to send out the S.O.S., the situation worsens each day.

"The board has felt that we've lost the ability to continue," she says. "We've made a number of attempts to increase participation, awareness, funding, but we continue to have a diminished ability to place people in spots that would enable coordination of activities, and in terms of the centre meeting our needs. It's not."

During GLCCE's drop-in hours (now three per evening), volunteers continue to provide core services, including a library, information centre, access to computers and a meeting room for group discussions. The latter accommodates in-house and guest groups like Youth Understanding Youth, perhaps the most active on site. As Ostendorf comments, the library is now underused given today's access to queer literature and, while group discussion attendance fluctuates, members of more active groups aren't providing an "overflow" in volunteer hours.



GLCCE's extensive community library, on the verge of disappearing forever

Efforts to revive the centre, meanwhile, have been unaltered. A public forum was first held in December with decent attendance. As a result, GLCCE began a letter campaign via mail and its website to increase volunteers, round up memberships and measure overall public interest. Support from the community's bar owners all seem to point to Buddy's and Woody's nightclubs, where two fundraisers are held annually for the centre. According to Ostendorf, at least three fundraisers were held in the month of February alone to "save our community".

Ostendorf's own feelings towards the community centre change daily. While she agrees most people value the centre, she admits that she is leaning towards closure, asking the community to re-connect and organize the re-birth of a vibrant, relevant new centre when they need one. She is hopeful that a new centre would address more current needs such as outreach, parenting, workshops on internalised homophobia and of course, paid staff. As Ostendorf adds, a new educational environment may also garner charitable status for fundraising, a status that, after legal counselling, GLCCE can't seem to sway in their favour. Ostendorf concludes that, unless there's a major overhaul soon, any good deeds like those of Buddy's could be too little, too late.

"You can't say you speak for the community with a membership of forty and I don't think a membership of 700 to 1,000 people should be a big stretch in a city this size," Ostendorf stresses. "If these things aren't reasonably forthcoming, then the board is prepared to make a recommendation that the organization cease to exist."

GLCCE has only begun to evaluate the centre's recent survey, the contradictory results of which are becoming a bewildering reflection of community apathy.

"For those of us who are out, stable and carrying on with our lives," observes Osdendorf, "we've had an easier time. But for those who need support, as much as we've put out useful services to assist, people are not participating. And yet strangely, the surveys we've received so far suggest people support it and want it."

At best, the attendance at GLCCE's AGM should test-drive Edmonton's true community spirit and leadership; at very least, the results will test the community's resiliency in the event of the centre's closure. In a city with serious coming out issues and no definable geographic gay village, any decision remains in critical condition for the time being.

And, as we all sit in the waiting room, Ostendorf offers an age-old solution to save an age-old institution:

"I don't know that aside from getting involved there's anything more we can do as a community. Buy a membership, volunteer, state your opinions and attend the events. If people do step forward, everything can start to grow from a place where it should be."

For progress reports, general information or to show your support for GLCCE, visit the GLCCE website at: www.freenet.edmonton.ab.ca/glcce. ▼

David King is a freelance journalist currently residing in Edmonton. A writer, performer and director, he is the co-founding Artistic Director of Montreal's OUT Productions.

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Laurie Blakeman, M.L.A. Edmonton-Centre
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February 4, 2004

Roy Heale, Publisher
Outlooks Magazine
1411 — 1st Street SE
Calgary, AB T2G 2J3

Dear Mr. Heale:

It is a distinct honour to recognize *Outlooks'* seventh anniversary of publishing thoughout Canada's gay and lesbian community.

Congratulations to you, your staff and of course the loyal readers of *Outlooks* for seven years of hard work, dedication and phenomenal growth!

You should be very proud of the work you do in cultivating diversity, tolerance, and understanding of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities. As the M.L.A. for Edmonton-Centre, I take a great deal of personal pride in representing an equally diverse constituency.

Again, on behalf of myself and my Offical Opposition colleagues in the Alberta Legislative Assembly, congratulations on another successful year.

Sincerely,

LAURIE BLAKEMAN, MLA
Edmonton-Centre

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We are currently seeking Models for future covers and Don't You Wish?

Email a snapshot along with your stats and contact information to:

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Please note:
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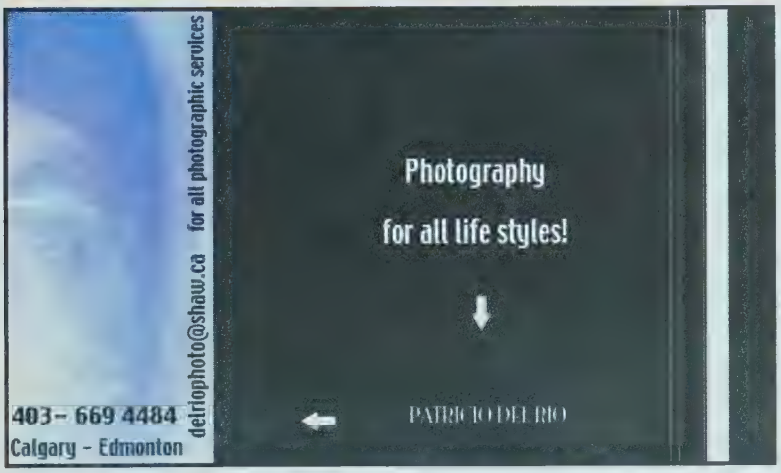

February, 2004

GREETINGS

Congratulations to *Outlooks* for its seventh year of service to Canada's gay and lesbian community.

From the first demands for equality a generation ago, the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community has achieved such dramatic gains that most of Canada's national institutions now acknowledge the right of anyone to make the commitment of marriage, regardless of sexual orientation. This is an important acheivement, but no reason for complacency. The City of Vancouver has been a great beneficiary of the growing strength and pride in the GLBT community.

On behalf of all our citizens, congratulations to *Outlooks* and best wishes to its readers.

Your truly,

Larry W. Campbell
MAYOR

Happy 7th Anniversary Outlooks!

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RSVP

National GLBT Writing Competition

By David Crosson

"It was a dark and stormy night; the rain fell in torrents—except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in London that our scene lies), rattling along the house-tops, and fiercely agitating the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness."

The first part of that sentence will likely ring familiar to the greatest number of ears as the line with which Charlie Brown's dog, Snoopy, began every story he wrote. Some of you will also be able to identify it as the opening of Edward George Bulwer-Lytton's 1830 novel, *Paul Clifford*, which served as the inspiration for the Bulwer-Lytton competition, a "bad writing" contest that was started in 1982 and continues to this day. Either way, it ain't the sort of thing we're looking for…

Exactly two years ago, in the March 2002 issue of *Outlooks*, we launched a very successful journalism competition called RSVP. In fact, we were so excited by the prospect of mounting the project that we completely forgot to acknowledge that it was created to mark the passing of the magazine's fifth anniversary. Now, a couple of years older and perhaps a bit wiser, we are pleased to announce the second coming of RSVP, a new writing competition more streamlined and focused in scope.

Back in 2002, from the release date of the March issue through July 31st of that same year, we solicited submissions from emerging journalists across Canada in a variety of categories: Humour; Book/Movie Review; Social Commentary; Poetry; Community Leader Interview; and Photography. In the following month we added Videography to that roster, bringing the total number of divisions up to seven.

Despite the success of the inaugural RSVP project, it was not without its drawbacks—the most obvious, it turned out, being the sheer volume of entries a seven-category competition could generate. Therefore, backed up by the clarity of 20/20 hindsight, we have decided to focus on a single area this time around: fiction.

With most of our cultural activity only being properly recorded in the past twenty-five to thirty years, much of what occurred previously has lived on through an oral tradition (insert joke here) of anecdote, legend, gossip and, in some cases, confession. It may be a massive cliché, but members of our community have a reputation—deserved or otherwise—for being wonderful storytellers. It seems only natural, then, that we select fiction as a category this time out; after all, the truth may well be stranger, but sometimes it doesn't give us enough latitude to embellish with the kind of colour we, quite frankly, have earned. For the purpose of this competition, we are embracing the user- (and judge-) friendly format of "short-short" fiction, stories that run no longer than 1,500 words in length. Judging from the success—both consumer and critical—of short-short fiction anthologies such as James Johnstone's *Quickies* series, the genre seems to be growing in popularity by leaps and bounds.

Intrigued? Think you might want to get in on the game? We sincerely hope so—particularly since the best follow-up to a successful project is the launch of an *even more* successful one. In order to encourage people to submit their work, just as last time around we will be awarding the top entry with a cash prize of CDN$1,000. If you're interested in entering a work (or works) of short-short fiction for the second edition of RSVP, then please read the rules and regulations listed above right. Queries regarding any of these, or RSVP in particular, should be directed by e-mail to: rsvp@outlooks.ca. Judges for the competition will be announced in a future issue of *Outlooks*.

✻ Stories submitted can be either narrative or written in the first person. Please bear in mind that this is a fiction competition, so work based in real-life must differ enough from actual, identifiable people and events in order to qualify. Obvious works of non-fiction will be automatically disqualified.

✻ Submissions must fall within the 1,500 maximum word count. All entries over the limit—even by a single word—will be automatically disqualified.

✻ All stories must be submitted in a PC-friendly manner, either in Word or Word.doc formats. Stories submitted in the body text of an e-mail, or in any format other than those previously specified, will be automatically disqualified.

✻ Electronic entries should be submitted to: rsvp@outlooks.ca and must be received by midnight on July 31st, 2004, without exception.

✻ Even though submissions are being accepted electronically, a hard copy of each story must also be submitted by post. Hard copy entries must be postmarked on or before July 31st, 2004, and should be sent to *Outlooks'* mailbox at:

Box 439, Suite 100
1039 17th. Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB
T2T 0B2

✻ Hard copy submissions will become the property of *Outlooks* and, without exception, will not be returned to entrants.

✻ First and second runners-up will have their stories published (without remuneration) in the October and November issues of *Outlooks*, respectively. The winning story will appear in the December 2004 edition. ▼

OUTLOOKS vancouver

March 2004 FREE

Audited Circulation 37,418

The price of the party

By Gerard M

Vancouver club owners have been ordered to pick up a $735,000 tab for policing costs related to late night closings. The extended hours—up to 4 a.m. on the weekends—are part of a plan to shake Vancouver's 'no fun' image. But with owners footing a massive bill, customers facing a crackdown on boisterous behaviour, and police resources stretched to the limit, people are wondering when the fun is supposed to *begin*.

Although the figure may be reduced, club owners seem resigned to accepting it as yet another cost of doing business.

"Council has not backed off from the $735,000," says Vince Marino of the PumpJack Pub on Davie Street. "They basically have stated that those are costs, they don't have it in the budget," he says, adding that "the mayor's been really, really clear that the contract has been structured for the police. They don't have the ability to change their scheduling at this time, they're short of manpower, the city can't go back and rehash the budget—so basically that's the amount."

Talks are continuing between the industry and Vancouver PD, and Marino says "if the police resources are not required to the level of $735,000, there would be a review or an adjustment in the next phase until this is over."

The police department is critically short-staffed due to pension policy changes that have forced dozens of resignations. The city is paying a premium for the extra patrols, because most officers are on overtime and being paid double. City Hall says police work schedules cannot be changed.

Barwatch, a group of twenty-one clubs participating in the late-hours trial, had initially estimated the extra security costs at around $300,000, but the industry figure was based on "straight time", not overtime.

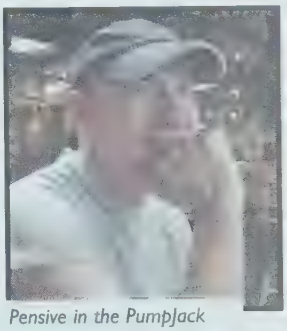
Vince Marino

Bars operating during the extended hours will have to pay a special fee of thirty to seventy-five cents per seat, depending on day and time. The seat tax will go toward the beefed up patrols to deal with noise, fighting, vandalism, traffic infractions and general disorderly behaviour, all related to later drinking hours.

It's unprecedented that private businesses are being billed for city services tied into their ordinary operations. Usually such charges would only be imposed for special events.

While city hall is treating the clubs as an exception, its raises the question of whether other businesses—restaurants, cheque cashing outlets, cab drivers, or 24-hour retailers—might also find themselves being billed someday because their businesses carry risks or create noise complaints that require more policing.

For now, bar owners are taking steps to reduce the need for extra police; for example, the big straight clubs on the Granville strip are hiring private security to discourage disruptive behaviour. Watch for fewer cheap drink specials, particularly around weekends and holidays when late hours are in effect, and more smoking rooms to keep noisy patrons off the street. Other plans include metal detectors and a more stringent identification process to gather and exchange information on customers. Bar owners like the benefits of high-tech surveillance—online data sharing that allows patrons to be tracked from bar to bar, and even red flagged—but many club-goers find such measures intrusive and heavy-handed.



Pensive in the PumpJack

Marino, who tested the hardware, says the message from his customers was loud and clear. "Our community reacted extremely negatively, with exactly those concerns of how the information is shared. We did not and are not planning to implement it…there are concerns all around about the privacy and how you use the information and where it's going" he says.

Somehow, none of this sounds like much fun for people who simply want to kick back for a cool one with their friends. "It isn't fun when you have to police it to that extent. At the same time I think it's going to take a little while," Marino admits.

It's ironic that instead of giving Vancouver a more open attitude, the late-night closing hours are resulting in more rules and fewer good prices on drinks. And if all these stricter controls are a hassle for drinkers, it doesn't sound like life is much more fun for bar owners who are juggling to please city hall, the police, the inspectors and their customers all at the same time.

It's clear the club owners just can't please everyone. And the gay bars have yet to decide if the new security costs will be passed on to customers.

"Most of [the clubs] on the Granville strip probably include [the cost] in a marketing scheme or increase the door charge. [PumpJack doesn't] have a door charge—the only way we could do that is to put it onto the prices," Marino says. "Can we? We're trying not to, because our community also reacts to that very differently."

Besides he adds, late hours or not, bar-goers in the Davie Village gay clubs have never been a problem for police. "Basically the policing side of the issue here for our bars, they hardly see us, in fact we don't really appear on the radar," Marino says. "On the other hand we have to make a choice—as the PumpJack or the Fountainhead or the Oasis or Numbers or the Odyssey—that if we want those hours then we're also sharing part of that burden, [but] it's a different world [here]."

lives in vancouver

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Okanagan's newest export

By Josh Murray

The Okanagan's most famous export is its wine, but in 2003 the region also produced a fine example of cooperation between local businesses and the GLBT community. Like any good wine, The Okanagan Gay and Lesbian Business Association aspires to become an ideal blend of flavours and traditions, and is working towards bringing business owners and entrepreneurs in the Okanagan together to celebrate their diversity, creativity and innovation.

Founding President Don Pretzer, of Kelowna's charming Springbuck Bed and Breakfast, is thrilled by the prospects this new resource holds for gays and lesbians in the region. "There had been limited ways for gay and gay-friendly businesses to gain recognition in the Okanagan," he says. "The Pride Week guide provides good exposure, but just once a year."

Now, with the OGLBA up and running, the local business landscape can become a little sweeter, with hints of understanding and support. According to Pretzer, "An impressive variety of local enterprises have advertised as gay or gay-friendly in the past: lawyers, accountants, real estate agents…artists…counsellors, restaurateurs, as well as specialty stores and gourmet shops."

Building on this solid base, the OGLBA hopes to create a new understanding for gay and lesbian locals and tourists alike, with a welcoming attitude and friendly service. "Our message to lesbians and gays [is that] today's Okanagan is gay-friendly and open for business all the year. Our region retains its natural attractions plus significant new urban amenities," Pretzer explains. "The vitality here comes with the growth of high tech, art galleries, wine, food, music scenes and post-secondary education. We have both an impressive quality of place and quality of life."

And thousands certainly agree. The population of the city of Kelowna alone now exceeds 150,000 and neighbouring areas, including Naramata, Penticton and Vernon, are growing at a steady rate. As the area ages, it only gets better. "Social and interest groups are expanding," says Pretzer, citing, among other things, gay and lesbian curling and softball teams. "A new gay nightspot is planned to open in downtown Kelowna this year," he adds.

It appears the region is welcoming new gay residents and enjoying the expanding diversity. But the Okanagan's interest in developing into an area with vivid accents and more varied tastes is nothing new. "In addition to our Shuswap and Okanagan nations, Anglo-Canadian, Japanese, Chinese and Sikh communities…have been here a century", Pretzer explains. "There is a rich mix of cultures here."

That rich mix helps define an area of the province that may not be well-known to an international audience. Just as B.C. wines have begun to establish a presence among French and American competition, so too is gay Okanagan hoping to expand its fan base. "While the Okanagan offers a range of attractions all year, most gays and lesbians visit in July and August," Pretzer says. "To increase lesbian and gay hospitality business all year, we are eager to promote the Okanagan as a resort destination in Europe, Asia, Australia and America." In fact, with air travel to Kelowna now an option through a number of airlines, the trip doesn't seem long at all. "With a single plane connection," says Pretzer, "scheduled service connects Kelowna to thirty-six destinations in the USA, plus twenty-six cities in European, Asian, Pacific and other North American countries."

To the international traveller, the Okanagan has much to offer, but Pretzer feels the region's greatest strength lies not in one thing, but the absolute variety the OGLBA intends to support so soundly. "Options," says Pretzer. "Options for work, options of where and how to live are as diverse as the land and people. For a lot of pursuits in life this can be a great place to excel." So the variety of activities and expansive landscape provide bountiful success—and so they should. After all, even the best winery in the world can't make a sustained success out of one great Cabernet or a particularly stellar Merlot.

Even with options, the international tourism competition is tough. What is bottled and sold on the travel market one year may not be what an audience is looking for the next. And here is where the region truly sparkles. "The Okanagan keeps evolving, developing its potential and attracting a younger, enterprising population with its natural beauty, native culture, frontier adventure and agricultural heritage," Pretzer enthuses. "Our cool Mediterranean climate is rated the best in Canada: fields of lavender; apricot and peach orchards; cycling, sport and adventure activities. The ski slopes have impressive snow packs of champagne powder."

Residents, however, are seldom tied down. Pretzer explains, "When the desire to get away hits, Kelowna's airport has scheduled non-stop service to Seattle-Tacoma, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton year 'round, and non-stop to Toronto and Hamilton in the summer."

Capturing the attention of potential visitors in areas far and wide is a challenging task that can often be simplified with presence on the Internet. In 2004, the Okanagan Gay and Lesbian Business Association will be perfecting its own online presence at **www.gayokanagan.com**. "We see gayokanagan.com as instrumental in future membership growth," says Pretzer. "Businesses need to have current and accurate listings to connect with their clients." Past Web entries for the area have been few and far between. "Web directories either covered a limited area or listings appeared by address—buried in vast directories with out-of-date entries," Pretzer says, and pledges to keep the OGLBA site "comprehensive" and "up-to-date".

Staying up-to-date is not an easy task for any organization without assistance, and the association has certainly found allies in their endeavour. "Tourism B.C. and the Okanagan Gay and Lesbian Business Association have hosted gay travel writers," Pretzer explains. "Tourism Kelowna, along with Westjet, major hotels and our association, [is] offering a pre-convention getaway to the Okanagan for International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association members in early May. We are a member of three local chambers of commerce and the IGLTA and will be promoting our region's spas, resorts and wilderness to gay travel and adventure tour professionals at the IGLTA convention."

All of this may sound exhausting, but it's precisely this extensive blend of hard work and determination that is required. And 2004 is, indeed, the perfect year—one to expand, develop and dream. "A mix of challenges and opportunities—the 2003 wildfires, same-sex weddings and honeymoons, the 2010 Winter Olympics, regional tourism initiatives, expanding airport service and Vancouver's selection as host of the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association 2004 convention—made this the time to become a registered society with a paid membership," says Pretzer.

Thanks in no small part to the OGLBA, it appears 2004 will be a good year in the Okanagan—for more than just Pinot Gris. ▼

Josh Murray is a Vancouver-based writer, ad exec. and all-around good time. For more log onto www.joshmurray.ca

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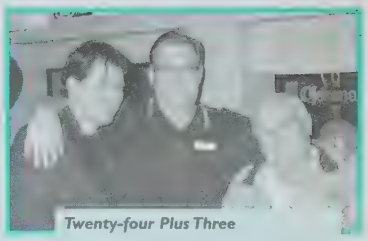
Gay Bingo diva, Joan-E, calls 'em as she sees 'em. To date, the bingo crew have raised over $136,000 for Friends For Life. Under the 'B'—bravo!

CELEBRATION

NUMBERS

Proud Crowd
Members of the community gathered to celebrate a nightlife milestone.

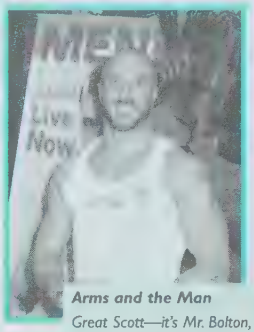


Twenty-four Plus Three
(From left) James Steck, Jamie and Phil Moon gather to celebrate and mug for the camera—talk about multi-tasking!

DANCE

PLAZA CLUB

Sex and the City Extras?
No, just "equal time for the ladies" on girls night out.

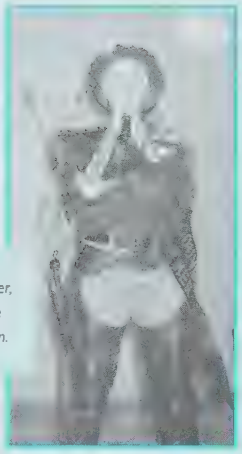


Arms and the Man
Great Scott—it's Mr. Bolton, always a pleasure to see. The hugs are even better...

Booth Boys
Guests of Heart On take a few minutes off from the festivities—we're certain they were back in action soon enough!

FUNDRAISER

LOTUS



Hide 'n' Seek
Ms Vancouver Leather, Stacy Clark, calls the participants to action.

SURREY OUT-OF-TOWN SHOW

BUDDY'S

She Puts the "Belle" in Belligham
Miss Bellingham, Betty Desire, braved our frozen northern climate to take part in the festivities.

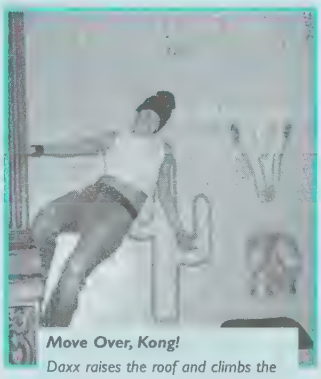
Smiling Despite the Departure
Outgoing royalty Chrystal, Tyler and Robynn put on a brave face as they prepare to step down.

UNDERWEAR PARTY

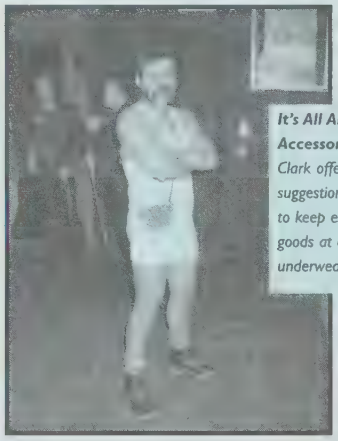
PUMPJACK PUB

Right On Cue
Striking a strategic pose, unfettered by a load of cumbersome clothing!

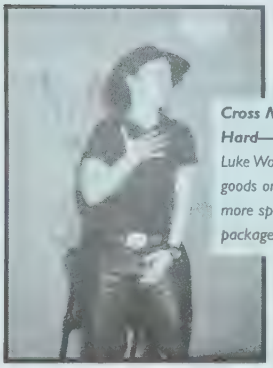
We Are Amused!
The crowd roars its approval for one of the performer's antics.



Move Over, Kong!
Daxx raises the roof and climbs the walls in aid of the cause.



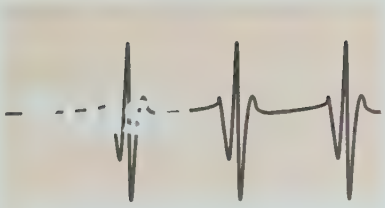
It's All About the Accessories
Clark offers a visual suggestion of where to keep essential goods at an underwear party.



Cross My Hard—Er, Heart!
Luke Wolf delivers the goods onstage...or, more specifically, a package.

Planning an event in Vancouver? Contact Barry at (604) 685-1377 and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. Photos By: Barry Piersdorff.

Numbers Game...
These gents have just discovered the joys of what is essentially a game of "boy bingo"!



By Pat Johnson

The Bard of diversity An intriguing new venture is underway—and you could be part of it. Roz Shakespeare, the retired Vancouver police officer who made history by becoming the first "out" transsexual police officer in the country, is teaming up with writer, artist and peer counsellor Terry Nelson to form Vibrant Group. The new firm invites us to join them March 8 to share stories. Vibrant Group's vision, according to Shakespeare and Nelson, is "to enlighten and educate their audiences about the diversity that is our world through a practical, multidimensional approach to diversity." Vibrant promises thought-provoking cultural awareness and diversity workshops to effectively communicate with any audience about the reality of the experiences of being "different." For more information, contact Shakespeare at (604) 879-0335. (BTW, shouldn't *Shakespeare* be the writer?)

Chance for Stardom The Coast Plaza Hotel is where you need to be April 3, for the annual fundraising outreach by the Centre. Stardom 2004 aims to bridge the gaps created by government funding cuts that are challenging all non-profits and social service groups and hopes to raise $16,000 through the event, which will include a raffle, silent auction and balloon burst. Sponsorships opportunities are still available and donations for the auction are requested. This is a great chance to make an impact for a good cause and garner some publicity for your business. Contact the co-chairs at (604) 790-8751 or (604) 708-0581. Tix to the event are on sale now at $30. Compared with the federal government's sponsorship "budget", $16,000 seems do-able.

Hedy times indeed Speaking of the federal government... plans for a spring election seem less certain than they were a few weeks back—apparently some not-very-good PR over some money seems to have put PM Paul into a tizzy. Expectations that the Liberals would romp to another victory are being challenged, which makes the heated contest for prize of Liberal nominations in various Vancouver-area ridings seem a little less desirable. Liberals who once hoped to sweep this province are now hoping to keep what they've got. Speaking of keeping what they've got, Hedy Fry—a big booster of our community—remains under threat from Lynne Kennedy, a former Vancouver city councillor who who apparently wants to spend most of her year in Ottawa. But Grit insiders tell me it's not Kennedy who threatens to bring down Fry, the giant-slayer who defeated former PM Kim Campbell in 1993. Taleeb Noormohamad is tipped as the one to watch, which means, in Liberal circles, he's probably signed up more "instant members" than the others. Time will tell. Even so, the prize may be less precious than it once was, not solely because the Libs are taking it on the chin over the sponsorship scandal, but because changes to the riding boundaries have brought in a chunk of upscale West Point Grey voters who weren't there last time around. A resurgent Conservative party will be doing what they can to avenge Kim's ghost.

Rubbing us the right way While Paul Martin tries to prevent the sponsorship scandal from sticking to his hide, a slightly different scandalous event is slated for April 2 to 4. That's when the annual Rubbout rubber play party weekend takes place featuring "vanilla to rubber bondage." There's a men-only play party Saturday afternoon at M2M, a pansexual social at MOR Rubber Saturday evening, and a brunch at Morrissey on Sunday. The weekend kicks off with a meet & greet at the PumpJack on Friday. You can get a weekend pass (a dog tag) to all the events for only $25 at MOR Rubber and Little Sisters. If you are from out of town, the Ramada Inn is the host hotel with rooms for $69/night; call 'em at (866) 685-1113 and quote group #2602 if you need a place to stay. More info at **www.rubbout.ca**. Frightened? For those who are unsure about rubber, maybe the Rubbout video night on Saturday March 6 will be a safe intro. Videos like *Taste of Rubber* will be shown and the intermission will feature rubber bondage demos. Any volunteers? Admission to the video night is free. While this year will be the 13th annual Rubbout, it will be the first year it's produced by Mitch Kenyon and his partners Chuck Davis and Earl Jesso.

Denman goes Ab Fab A tantalizing note from folks at Ab Fab ... no, not the beloved British comedy duo. Ab Fab, a new neighbourhood bar, community information centre, event ticket handler and all-round go-to place on Denman Street. In addition to typical pub-style food, Ab Fab suggests they will take a role in the community as a place where groups can get together and meet, with facilities for meetings and socials of all sorts at no charge. Watch for further updates or, if you can't wait, e-mail them at: abfab@telus.net.

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Getting married while we still can

By Pat Johnson

On March 20, the last day of winter, the 10th anniversary of when we met, my partner Paul and I will get married. There will be flowers and rings, food and probably tears. But there won't be many people, just the marriage commissioner and the two witnesses required by law. And that is three too many people for us, frankly.

In the year since I bought the ring and gave it to Paul on our ninth anniversary, we've been forced to think a lot about what marriage means to us. Canada, by coincidence, has had to go through the same process.

Given more time, we might have come up with something a bit more elaborate or imaginative than a civil ceremony in our living room. But we feel pressed for time. Not just because we want to do this on our 10th anniversary—we could have waited for our twelfth or fifteenth or fiftieth. But our right to marry is being considered by the Supreme Court of Canada right now, and it is destined to be considered by Parliament. And we're not going to wait for them to change their minds.

Like plenty of gay couples (and individuals), we have major ambivalence about marriage. Our life together is so private and quiet that it doesn't seem quite right to bring dozens of people in to witness what is effectively just another day among 3,650—and counting. That's our choice. But we're also forced to consider what it means to invite the government into our life by having it recognize our relationship.

Marriage has been a lot of things over the years: a beautiful sharing of two people's love before their community, a contract between families, a perpetuation of patriarchal lineage, a time for joyous celebration, the selling of children by dowry, the conveyancing of property, an excuse for a feast. No two marriages are the same. Some are wonderful and some are awful. My relationship with Paul fulfils my ideals of what coupling should be and I can point to plenty of marriages that do not. In the end, we concluded that if we live in a society where society recognizes relationships by legislating marriages, we deserve and demand to be included.

The kind of society we live in, of course, is at the very root of the whole debate over our right to marry.

In the past two decades, since the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was promulgated, Canada has moved from a nation with strong collectivist tendencies to a society very much based on individual rights. The fight over equal marriage is an excellent model of this change in Canadian society. It demands of us a choice between individual fulfilment and collectivist ideals. Most Canadians are tired of being pushed around by intrusive governments—and what could be more intrusive than being told who you can marry?

The speciousness of equal marriage opposition was massively evident in the mid-February broadcast of CBC Newsworld's Sunday morning flagship newsmagazine, when on live television it aired a wedding between two men, then linked to a room full of people opposed to equal marriage. The vision of two people exchanging vows, then listening to a crowd of people critique it is nothing new. We've been dissing fuschia dresses and purple prose for years. But to watch two people commit themselves to each other for life, then listen to a crowd of people say their marriage is illegitimate put into beautiful relief the inherent nastiness and cruelty of the anti-marriage lobby. Whether their arguments are religious or "societal" (or just garden-variety prejudiced), in the end, the debate comes down to telling two people their love is not valid. And that, repeated often enough, will eventually repulse most Canadians the way it repulses us.

Margaret Somerville, the media-savvy McGill University ethicist, declared that equal marriage reflects a tendency to say that marriage is whatever we say it is, a view she claims is contradictory to the imperative that "kids have a right to a mother and a father."

This is the crux of the arguments presented by opponents of equal marriage. While we might contend that children have a right to a home filled with love and fulfilment of other complex human needs, our critics insist that children simply need a parent of each gender, no matter how brutal. It's a mind-numbingly simplistic and instinct-driven response that says the only criteria necessary for parenthood is the ability to procreate.

This argument, which is the most banal and flawed position of all (to say nothing of unromantic) is easily rejoindered by asking if we should annul all "barren" marriages? McGill's Somerville had a tidy response: marriage between two opposite-gender people, even those who can't procreate, at least symbolically reinforces the notion of procreation. Yeah, and singing in the shower makes me Josh Groban.

Then there's the whole marriage-versus-civil-union extravaganza, which reflects a long tradition in society by offering subordinate categories of recognition, just like societies have often had for women and people of different colours, religions and beliefs. No matter how long a tradition, it is still a dismal one.

Other guests on the program stated that gay marriage could open **continued opposite**

from previous

the door to marriages involving three or four persons. Perhaps. But right now we're talking about two same-gender people and introducing superfluous issues like marriages between earthlings and martians doesn't really add anything to this discussion. This line of argument is all the more flawed for the way it defeats the other premise of equal marriage opponents, which is that two opposite sex parents are ideal. How, then, would three or four parents be worse? Does it take a village or doesn't it?

Another guest of the program, Rev. Brian Warren, hit the nail on the head, though one doubts he recognized it. Having just watched a gay wedding via closed-circuit hookup, he acknowledged that it's difficult to criticize an individual marriage like this. In other words, blanket condemnations are easier when they don't involve real people. This is the most difficult part of bigotry: it imposes preconceived ideas on real individuals.

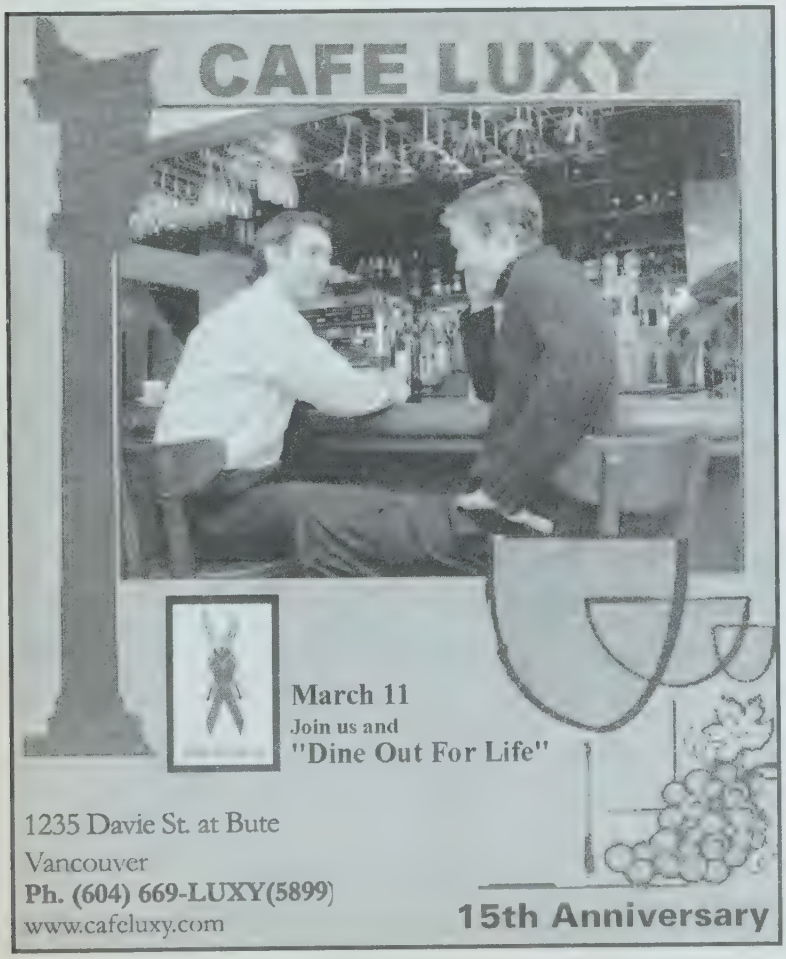
But the clergyman's comments point out the ultimate weakness of the anti-equal marriage position. A lot of Canadians strongly oppose our right to marry and they are very amenable right now to some of the arguments put forward by critics like Somerville and Warren. However, Canadians have developed over recent decades a very "live and let live" attitude toward other Canadians. Criticism of gay marriage has resonance now: it's new, it's topical, it's all over the papers and talk radio. But, at its root, the argument against equal marriage comes down to negating love, a proposition with a very flimsy future.

In the long-term, we will not lose this fight because our demand is so basic, simple and fair. Opponents' arguments are so deeply flawed, insupportable and contrary to Canadian tendencies that I believe their constant repetition will undermine—not reinforce—them. Their opposition will not stand the test of time the way love will.

But the short-term is another matter. The courts have said we can marry; Parliament has not. There are plenty of legal and political twists left up the sleeves of opponents. The ultimate weapon is the "notwithstanding" clause of the constitution, which a prime minister can effectively invoke at whim to strike down everything the courts have decreed. Even if the government does reverse our right to marry, this genie will not go back in the bottle. Time is on our side, even if the next government is not. Even if the Liberals are returned to power, the dynamics of what MPs and candidates hear from voters on the campaign trail could turn the tide of this debate in the short-term.

In the end, a sense of decency and individual rights will lead us back to a Canadian compromise, by which marriage will be recognized as whatever the two people involved say it is. And that could be a long way off. In the meantime, we will marry while we can. And we will parse the many meanings of marriage later. ▼

Pat Johnson is a communications consultant and a freelance writer for a variety of publications.



Breaking out

By Tyler Hopson

It sounds crazy, but an increasing number of us have something in common with Al Capone. No, the gun-toting gangster wasn't gay. But he did have syphilis—and so do a rising number of gay men in Vancouver.

Despite several years of work by the B.C. Centre for Disease Control to halt its spread, syphilis continues to do so. "Gay men are a big part of the outbreak and they're becoming more and more important," says Dr. Mike Rekart of the BCCDC.

The disease has been on the rise in the city since 1997. But in recent years it has become more common. The outbreak began among Vancouver's sex trade workers, and is still a larger problem for that group. Rekart says this situation is unique, as most other syphilis outbreaks in the world are predominantly among gay men. He suggests that syphilis made its way into Vancouver's gay community because there is some contact between gays and sex trade workers, socially and sexually, and also in terms of the places they live.

Younger men less informed and more vulnerable

For many guys, to be young and gay is to be cute and have lots of dates. But research shows there is also a downside. In 2002, a survey by Vancouver's Community Based Research Centre found that one in three gay men under the age of thirty knew little about syphilis compared to other STDs.

Terry Trussler, who was closely connected to the survey, says "I think it's a cultural thing. Syphilis hasn't been a problem for many years and so younger guys aren't as likely to have heard of it. Older guys remember it from years ago."

A 2003 survey by the Community Based Research Centre suggests more men are getting tested for syphilis. Of the 250 men who completed the survey, forty-six percent had tested for the illness in that year.

"That means a lot of guys have concerns about syphilis," says Trussler.

He says there is a very strong connection between seeing ads about syphilis prevention in newspapers and getting tested, and that the newest survey showed "guys are concerned, they got tested, and that the ads had helped alert them to that."

But Rick Marchand, also involved with the survey, says younger gay men still got tested less and hadn't seen the ads as much as the other age groups. Some younger gay men hadn't even heard that there was a syphilis outbreak.

"They're less able to negotiate safe sex, they know less about HIV and protection, they have less support systems," says Rekart of young gay men.

There are also issues young men go through that older men may already have dealt with. "Young gay men have a special issue around coming out and discrimination." This may increase their vulnerability, Rekart adds. He says young people in general often don't feel they are vulnerable, even if they actually are. "It's always said that young people feel like they can't get sick," he offers.

Testing it out

Symptoms of syphilis often show up within a month of initial infection. The first sign is a small, round sore (called a chancre) that appears on the spot where syphilis entered the body. For many men this will be on their penis, but a sore can also show up in the mouth or anus. Despite the possibility of chancres appearing, doctors say many people can have syphilis and not even know it.

In its early stages, the disease will not likely have a serious effect on the health of those who have it; however, health problems will become more and more serious the longer it goes untreated. In extreme cases, it can even cause death, although this is quite rare.

Marchand says a lot of guys may not realize they can get syphilis from oral sex—either by performing or receiving it. The disease can be caught from having unprotected anal sex, as well, and syphilis makes it easier to contract and transmit HIV.

The best way to find out if someone has syphilis is by being tested. It is one STD that is quick and relatively easy to cure as long as it's detected early enough. Marchand says sexually active men should be in "regular contact" with STD clinics, and Trussler recommends getting tested about every six months.

Trussler says if people are testing regularly, there's less of a chance that the outbreak will become really serious.

Wrapping it up

Gay men have been told to use condoms for years, and most of them do. Recent years have seen some men doing away with condoms and going bareback—a complex issue, indeed. Rekart admits that the "just wear a condom" message has been around for a long time; possibly too long. "Everybody's being told to wear condoms. The message hasn't been reinforced and revitalized in new ways," he says. "It's getting sort of old and boring and nobody *wants* to use condoms anyway."

But that doesn't mean they should stop wearing them, he says.

Both Marchand and Trussler are optimistic, based on the results of their surveys.

"The fact that about forty-six percent of guys had a syphilis test is encouraging," says Marchand. "It's encouraging that the ads and the word-of-mouth is getting around."

For Trussler, just knowing there's an awareness among gay men about syphilis is important. "It's encouraging that guys are paying attention."

The message may be old, but Rekart feels he needs to say it one more time. "Condoms are very protective. It's up to young people and old people to protect themselves if they're at all unsure of their partner."

While Al Capone's legacy lives on in crime, the legendary Mafia boss nearly died of the disease himself. Despite decades of improvements in medicine, syphilis is still a big deal if left untreated, but common sense, condoms, and regular tests can prevent Vancouver boys from meeting a similar fate. ▼

Tyler Hopson is a freelance writer and graduate student based in Vancouver.

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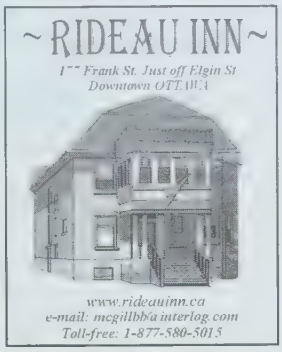

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We're in this together

Roundtable organizer Chris Morrisey

Is the great divide between young and old nothing more than a myth?

More than a dozen Vancouver queers, ranging from high school students to senior citizens, discovered they have a surprising amount in common at a recent roundtable on age-based perspectives.

"I guess to some extent I think there *is* a generation gap," says organizer Chris Morrissey, "but I don't think the generation gap is—this was the surprise to me—necessarily around values and beliefs. I think those values and beliefs cut across the generations...I think the gap is in terms of how we mix and don't mix."

The straight community, built around the nuclear family, offers plenty of opportunities for young and old to get together. For gays, there are far fewer chances for interaction and it's more difficult for people from different age groups to get to know one another.

"There are very definite groupings of people, and we don't have many opportunities to actually come together…so we perpetuate the stereotypes in our own heads that youth are different and we are different," says Morrissey, who coordinates the Generations Project.

Generations works with seniors' organizations, health care providers, and the community in an attempt to improve the quality of life of older gays and lesbians. Elder homosexuals are often shunned by our youth-obsessed culture; at best invisible, at worst, victims of homophobia. Morrisey's group wants us to acknowledge that gay seniors do exist, and that they deserve acceptance and respect.

While differences between young and old are self-evident, the discussion revealed that feelings about coming out, connecting with family, looking for love and dealing with discrimination are strikingly similar, regardless of age or gender. Many feel we're missing out when because we don't recognize the many things we have in common.

"I was in Ireland in December and I went out to a modern dance [recital]," says Joan Bridgett, a lesbian in her fifties, "everyone was there from three to eighty. And it struck me how very few of those experiences I have here in Vancouver and how much less rich my life has become because of that."

Newly out: Heather Fergusson

Bridgett feels she could benefit from the energy and ideas of young people, who in turn, might be encouraged by those who've worked through life's challenges and survived. "Life goes on. I think some of that gets lost when you don't have the generations mixing; on both ends we lose out," she says.

Heather Fergusson, a mother and former wife who came out only recently, also admires the energy and courage of younger women, but hardly ever socializes with them.

"I entered the community late," she says, "and the women I'm meeting are around my age, they're fifty-plus…in some ways there is a generation gap there. I think that I'm certainly more conservative as far as behaviour."

Discussion participant Joan Bridgett

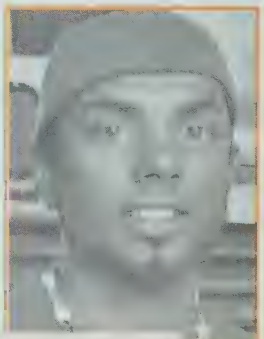
Bridgett agrees, saying that "going to a dance, or whatever, it's different music, [and] it's different energy and it doesn't really work for me."

Music, fashion, and pop culture trends—powerful forces in the gay community—are often the major factors that separate young from old. But when the focus moves beyond shoes and hairstyles, the generations it seems are far less different.

Youth worker Romi Chandra notes that there is a "commonality of oppression" in the community. Emotions—both positive and negative—can be overwhelming when people of any age decide to emerge from the closet, and then try to reconnect with friends and family. At the roundtable, one young man recounted his struggle to come out to his sister at a family wedding, only to have his sister respond that she knew all along. While the discussion revealed that he and a young lesbian participant are out socially to some degree, they remain firmly in the closet at home.

"Their family experiences sound very much like our family experiences," says Morrissey. "I guess maybe I was a bit surprised about that. That if the kids are out, I think I expected them to be somewhat more out to their families."

Bridgett was also caught off guard by some of the young people's comments. "I was surprised that it's still so hard for young people," she says.

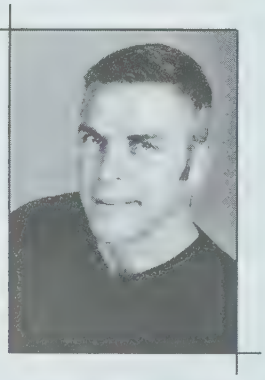


Youth worker Romi Chandra

Because of the community's huge political strides, it's often assumed that today's gay youth have it easy. That's just not the case. "It's a bit of a doubled edged sword," says Morrissey, "that young people today have more awareness and there's more opportunity for them to come out. The other side to that is that they also experience the backlash that we perhaps didn't experience…"

Not all divisions are based on age. There were strong opinions expressed on our self-imposed labels, on how gays have become a marketing demographic, how we oppress each other, and how the community has been fragmented, especially along economic and gender lines.

As of press time, planning was underway for an activities afternoon in March that will again bring young and old together.



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Help for hate crimes team

By Gerard MacMullin

There's been a reprieve for B.C.'s internationally recognized hate crime team. Premier Gordon Campbell and Solicitor General Rich Coleman assured community leaders that the understaffed team will receive more funding, support and priority. The promise came after a meeting with a coalition headed by the Canadian Jewish Congress, which included Vince Marino of the Vancouver Police Diversity Advisory Committee and Donna Wilson, Executive Director of the Centre.

"Having the broad-based approach was a really powerful expression of how hate crimes cross diverse communities and are experienced by diverse individuals," says Wilson. She adds that having so many different groups at the table "increased our strength and increased the strength of our message."

The meeting also included representatives from the Chinese and South Asian communities, as well as multicultural and human rights groups—a strong indication that hate crimes have an impact on a wide cross-section of British Columbians.

The hate crime team—set up to coordinate province-wide efforts to fight hate crime—was so short-staffed and underfunded that it was unable to publish its annual status report. The team is crucial to minority groups like the GLBT community, because the best hate crime laws on the books are useless if people don't know they exist, police don't know how to apply them, and the justice system doesn't know how to use them.

Donna Wilson, Executive Director of the Centre

A shocking example came during the recent sentencing of a youth convicted in the gay bashing murder of Aaron Webster. Although an outraged community viewed the Webster killing as an obvious case of hate crime from day one, crown prosecutors failed to make the connection. The crown asked for a sentence of twenty to thirty-two months in the manslaughter conviction of a nineteen-year-old who was a youth at the time and cannot be identified. In a surprise move, Judge Valmond Romilly went beyond what the crown was requesting and ruled the killing was indeed a hate crime, imposing the maximum three-year sentence. If big city crown prosecutors can't identify an obvious hate crime, what hope is there that small town victims will see justice served?

For the record, hate crime is an offence motivated by prejudice or bias against an identifiable group based on factors including race, religion, colour, sex, age, disability or sexual orientation. It may involve intimidation, harassment, threats or assault, and its forms vary from vandalism and graffiti to the willful promotion of hatred.

One of the major goals of the team is to ensure laws are applied and prosecuted consistently, and not overlooked. The Unit works with police province-wide, shares information, keeps a central data base and monitors incidents reported by police and individuals. A community coordinator works with interested groups to raise awareness of what hate crime involves, and how to deal with it.

The B.C. team serves as a model for other units across Canada, and been honoured with a civil rights award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Wilson called the province's response impressive because it went beyond the issue of funding the hate crime unit. "The premier and the solicitor general were very attentive…and it was the premier himself who [suggested] the issues our communities are experiencing require a broader base of responses. So I was very impressed that he raised that and acknowledged that to us."

Wilson says she looks forward to working with the government in "addressing safety issues throughout the province."

The Canadian Jewish Congress says, ultimately, victims hold the key to combating hate crime. They encourage anyone who feels he's been subjected to an offense to report it to police immediately. ▼

B.C. Hate Crime Info Line 1-800-563-0808

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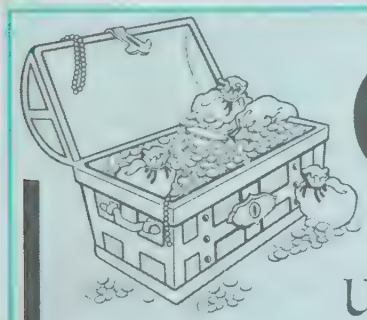
Gerard MacMullin is a writer/broadcaster who lives in Vancouver's West End.



Community Chest

Upcoming Events:

March 11 — Dining Out For Life
Over 150 participating restaurants in the lower mainland will donate 255 of the foor bill to A loving Spoonful and the Friends For Life Society - if you dine out once in March - do it on the 11th!!!

March 20 — Score 5 - The Cutting Edges presents the 5th Skating Party
To benefit The Dr Peter Centre. West End Community Centre Ice Rink, 8:45pm
$10 pre - $12 at the door

April 3 — Stardom
The annual Fundraiser for the Vancouver Gay & Lesbian Centre to be held at the Coast Plaza Hotel & Suites. For more info visit www.stardom2004.com

Monies Raised Last Month:

L' Amour raised $5000 to benifit the Dr Peter Centre

Live By Request with Mandy Kamp at the Oasis raised $300 in benefit of the Dogwood Monarchist Society

Thanks to the Vancouver Community for your support!

To pre-promote your fundraiser or report on monies raised in the next issue of *Outlooks Vancouver* email: main@outlooks.ca or fax info toll free to 1-877-885-6657

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A wealth of ideas

By [illegible]

Even though The Interior Design Show calls itself "Canada's hot residential design event", it might also want to consider this new promo line: "How you'd spend a ton of money if you actually had it". To be honest, the exhibits were great, but the expression "yuppie-ville" came to my mind more than once. At one end of the spectrum were people who *wanted* style and on the other were people who actually *had* it, with a whole mix of people falling somewhere in the middle.

The Toronto-based show, held in the middle of February, attracted almost 50,000 people to the National Trade Centre over three days. One day was dedicated exclusively to design industry professionals and two days were for the public (I took in the show as part of the latter.) I learned two things while strolling through the hundreds of exhibits. The first is that out-of-control, screaming children (and for some reason there were many of them the day I was there) are the purist form of contraception. The second thing I realized is that it's dangerous to take an attractive friend to these sorts of ultra-gay-positive events while they're on the hunt for a new man. He called the show the ultimate "guppie pond" and he was in the mood to do some fishin' (think gay, then think yuppie and you've got a 'guppie'). I lost him more than once and found myself wandering alone through the maze of aisles and exhibits. Thank god for cell phones when you've lost your companion in a 175,000 square foot space. He wasn't kidding though, there were some very attractive…um…*displays*.

DJ Collette spins at the Blue Party, a benefit for CANFAR

As with many multi-faceted big events, there is often one party that's *the* party. At the design show, it was The Blue Party, an all-out bash where dancing, design and live entertainment mixed in support of Canadian Foundation for Aids Research (CANFAR). When an event is sponsored by Mercedes-Benz and *Canadian House & Home Magazine*, it's natural for people to expect that it's going to be a good time. While rubbing shoulders with some incredibly well-dressed people, socially conscious urban-hipsters could preview exhibits—martinis in hand—while DJ Colette kept the party vibe going.

This year was the first time CANFAR was selected as the recipient of the funds raised at the show. They're a national charitable foundation created to "raise awareness in order to generate funds for research into all aspects of HIV infection and AIDS". A worthy cause to be sure. The show reviews a number of charities each year before making their selection. "CANFAR was very well organized to undertake an event of this scale," says Heather Hatch, the woman responsible for promoting the bash. "We had worked with Casey House in the past and knew the gay community would support the fundraiser." Good music, martinis and design… if you build it, they will come.

Anne-Marie Enns, with CANFAR, says the organizers "...were looking to head in a new direction with the opening night and were intrigued by what we'd done with the Red Party". The Red Party takes place this year in mid-May. The party is young, it's hip and it's a highlight on CANFAR's fundraising calendar. The Blue Party, by all accounts, was a success and the venture clearly worked out for both groups—the show got a cool party and between CDN$10,000 to 15,000 was raised for a worthy cause. Over a thousand people attended the event.

A clear highlight of the bash was the official opening of the concept spaces exhibit, sponsored by the *Globe and Mail*. It was a part of the show where designers created distinct areas based entirely on a single concept. The 'Spaces' display gave the award-winning design firms of Bruce Mau Design Inc., Core Architects Inc. and Plant Architects Inc. the opportunity to "explore new materials, new concepts and new directions in design". As though they could read my mind, this year's design teams addressed the notion of wealth. "What makes a person wealthy? Is it a healthy environment, good living, leisure time, family, a rich spiritual life, comfort, escape, happiness?" A maze of three unique spaces by each firm tackled the notion.

Bruce Mau created a dichromatic room that was comprised of thousands of layered black and white images in almost every inch of the space, including the furniture. Pictures of hugging lovers, family celebrations and children playing were everywhere and intended to "stimulate discussion and awareness of the many things that make you wealthy". To create this room you'd have to be rich, if not just to cover the processing costs of all the film!

All-in-one: Core Architects takes a slick approach to reflect on emotion

Core Architects developed an exhibit intended to cater to viewers' emotions, a sleek space created to reflect our emotional duality. Half the room was dedicated to the introverted times (like sleeping and bathing), and the other was for the extroverted (preparing food and socializing). "What you put in a space may be expensive; designing a space that caters to your inner emotions—priceless".

Plant Architects' interpretation of wealth was the "feeling one gets when they share a wonderful dining experience with family and friends" and featured a massive twenty-one-foot-long dining table made of wood, floor-to-ceiling walls of firewood and a fireplace at one end of the table. It played with the idea of interior and exterior spaces and a room that would land somewhere between the two. I got the concept, but is that much wood and an open flame a smart move?

With all the design-speak and promotion at each of the stops on the concept spaces exhibit, it was also clear that, when you're a designer, part of what makes you wealthy is getting people who are willing to pay big dollars on their own "wealthy" living spaces to love your work.

At the end of a long day of looking at items I loved but couldn't possibly afford, I was just happy to catch a glimpse of Debbie Travis, who made an appearance at the show…now *that's* rich!

[illegible] is a freelance journalist based in Toronto. With the aim of taking a true look at the diversity of the gay community he's done work for Fab and appeared as a [illegible]

All design show photos above and on page 3 are courtesy of Arash Moallemi.

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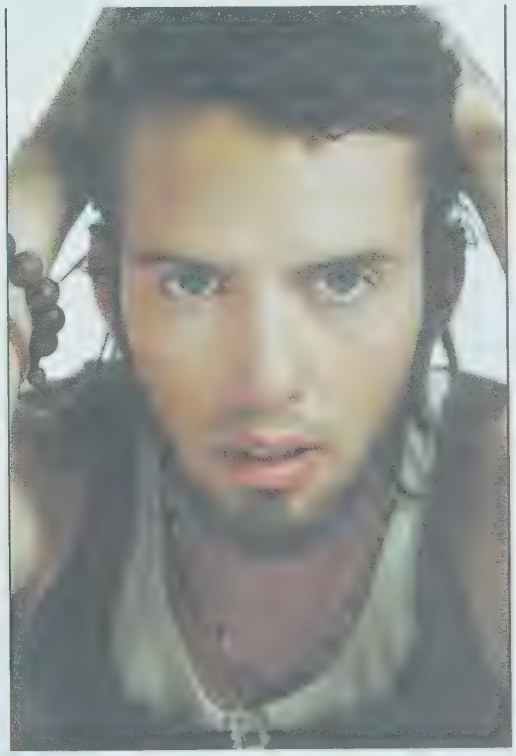

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OUTLOOKS

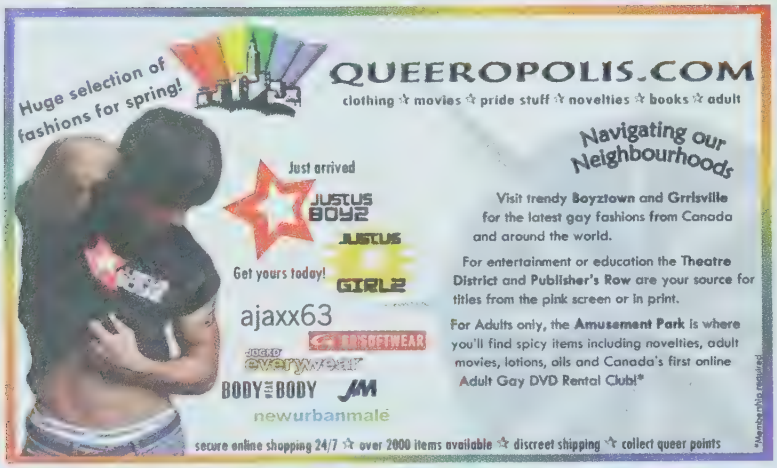
MILLENNIUM COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

DON'T YOU WISH?

Christian

This Halifax boy stays active in his spare time by playing rugby, soccer and football, and balances it all with his love of music, dance and travel

Large photo by Brian Lawrence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OUTLOOKS

MILLENNIUM COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

PRO file

Board Member:
Michael Wright

Question:
How are funds distributed by the OMCF?

Answer:
Funds are distributed on a regional basis. That is, funds raised in a particular province or region (i.e. the Maritime region) stay within that area to support local projects.

Alberta projects have received the most funding to date, since the OMCF was founded here and our profile is higher here than anywhere else in the country at this point. Some examples of funded projects include GLBT-themed theatre productions by Teatro Berdache, the Fairy Tales Film Festival, AIDS-related causes like Small Change...Big Changes and the Sharp Foundation, to name a few.

This past summer, OMCF sponsored part of the Youth Series at Out On Screen, the Vancouver Queer Film Festival.

We are always looking for more opportunities to expand in other regions, and we'd welcome anyone interested in promoting this very worthwhile work in their area. Just contact us through the website:.

To get more information regarding criteria or budget submissions etc. Visit us online at:

www.OMCF.ca

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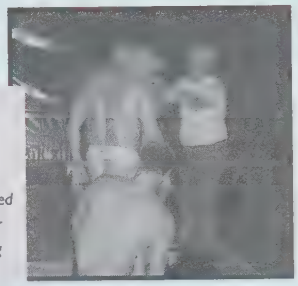
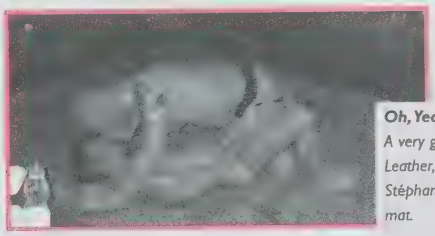
Getting to the Point
Mistress (and Mistress of Ceremonies) Marsha Black preps the crowd for the fun—and mess—ahead.



This Isn't On the Diet, Is It?
Many hands make light labour as Stéphane gets greased up in preparation for the Mazola wrestling competition.

Planning an event in Edmonton? Contact us via e-mail at: editor@outlooks.ca and we'll see about covering it in Out & About. All photos by David King



Oh, Yeah? Well Top This!
A very greasy Mr. Edmonton Leather, Scott Bryen, shows Stéphane who's boss on the mat.

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HAPPY 7TH BIRTHDAY

Congratulations From Edmonton!

Over the past seven years, *Outlooks* has been a great addition to Edmonton's lesbian and gay community. Your magazine has greatly contributed to the vibrancy of Canada's gay community and has brought respect to all of us. As a gay man in Alberta politics, I fully appreciate the importance of the magazine's mandate in educating people in this province and the role of advocacy that *Outlooks* takes to improve our quality of life and makes Canada a better place for all.

So...enjoy this special day and best wishes for year number 8!

Sincerely,

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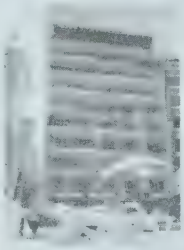

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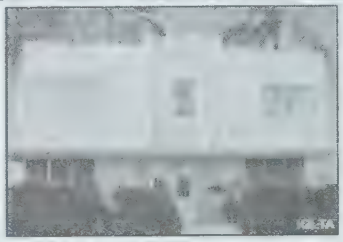

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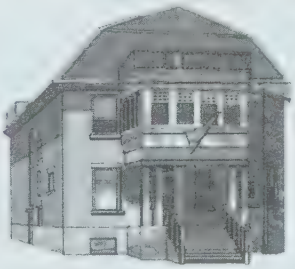

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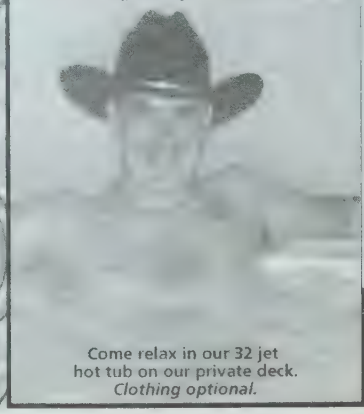

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OUTLOOKS Q reviews

Film

By Dale Smith

Director: Amber Benson
From: Benson Entertainment
Running time: 75 minutes
Release Date: 2003

Buffy fans rejoice! (And really, how many of us aren't fans?) *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was one of the gayest shows on television—and not just because of Willow and Tara...(and Kennedy and Larry, and Andrew and probably Lorne). But fans saddened by Tara's demise can take heart, for here is Amber Benson's follow-up project.

This independent film, written, directed and produced by Benson herself, is proof of just how talented the "not-just-an-actress" really is. What is especially amazing about the film is that she made it entirely out of her own pocket—no other financial backers or distribution partners involved—which gave her total creative freedom over the project. She later set up a fundraiser to recoup costs, but kept her vision intact. All of this at the age of twenty-four. And *Chance* is definitely *not* your conventional romantic comedy.

Chance (Benson) is a twenty-something girl, a trust fund baby who lives with her friend Simon (Buffy's James Marsters, using his natural American accent). She continually reminds him that he doesn't pay rent and has a problem with body odour. Both are unlucky in love and, though Chance is halfheartedly looking for her Mister Right, she's not afraid to detour with a few girls along the way. Living in their complex is Milton (Nate Barlow), whom she describes as "a creep", with his constant surveillance, Polaroids and discussion of bugs dying unnatural deaths.

Absurdity happens. A random girl Chance takes home from a club in the Valley winds up dead in her bed. Neither she nor Simon knows how to deal with it. Chance's "New Age" mother, Desiree (Christine Estabrook), shows up, declaring her intention to divorce her father. Chance's older brother, Zero, must never find out. Chance meets and completely falls in love with Jack (*Angel*'s Andrew Hallett), a bar singer from Oregon who turns out to be gay (as if *that* were a stretch to imagine). Outside of the green makeup and the horns in which we usually see Hallett, he's really quite cute.

Adding to the absurdity is the non-linear format of the film. Presented both in narrative and a series of flashbacks, *Chance* is punctuated by straight-to-camera monologue, but we have to wonder whether these asides are really in Chance's mind, breaking the fourth wall, or actually happening, as Milton suddenly asks her "Why are you talking to yourself?"

The dialogue is sharp and funny. The characters are all on this side of quirky, bordering on odd. The film, which gives us a look into the inner workings a young woman's mind, is at times brilliant. In fact, the only downside is the guy-with-a-guitar-original-music provided by Grant Langston. And, while his folk-y lyrics can be amusing, his appearances are quite intrusive—easily enough fast-forwarded through, if you're so inclined. Overall, however, this film offers a most enjoyable experience; I've watched it several times over and haven't tired of it yet.

As the film is currently without mainstream distribution, it is available through it's own official website , located at: **www.chancemovie.com**. Though it is a little on the pricey side, it's no more than an import or art-house DVD (which, let's face it, all good gay movies tend to be) and, in my opinion, definitely worth every cent—especially when you have the satisfaction of knowing that all of the money goes directly to the artist who created it, not some monolithic studio. *Chance* is a movie that is quickly climbing to the top of my "favourites" list. ▼

Favourite Line:

Chance: "I like my demons. I consider them close personal friends. In fact, we enjoy each other's company immensely."

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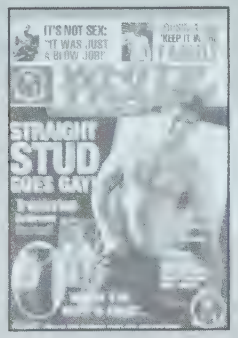
White Trash

From: MSR Videos



Featuring: Rod Barry, Clay Maverick, Trent Cougar, Bret Wolfe, Luke Pearson, Anthony Shaw, Chad Johnson, Sharon Kane, Frieda Lay Brown, Rowdy Canon

Running Time: 75 minutes

If you've heard stories about life in a trailer park and how the white trash residents find ways to pass their time, then this light-hearted story is going to reveal some southern escapades that destroy the myths. This trailer park family of husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, cousins, sons and strangers intermingle to give a behind-the-scenes glimpse of family love and sexual relationships.

When Luther (a classic beer-drinking, TV-addicted husband) says he's not interested in joining his wife at the local bar for a karaoke championship, a family fight is on. Earlene is going to have to go and sing with her friend Kitty and leave her husband, son, nephew and brother-in-law alone at the trailer. Her son Amos is working on his truck, while his old man and cousin Jeremiah are watching *Jerry Springer* on the box.

As soon as the "broads" have gone off to sing for their trophy, the heat of the day, the hot action on television and a few cold beer cause Luther to start feeling horny. He drops his pants and reveals his huge problem to Jeremiah, who shows that family means always helping each other out. Luther is "blown away" by his nephew's expert mouth and just can't seem to get enough.

Meanwhile, before they reach the bar, the womenfolk need some gas for their car and a local gas jockey at the service station is ready to oblige and fill them up. However, he declines to join the ladies at the bar because he has to stay and take care of the gas station. This includes some servicing in the men's washroom with a trucker and a grease monkey who both need a huge favour to get them on their way. Fortunately, the gas jockey is big enough to fill their needs, too!

Back at the trailer park, Amos is still working on his truck when cousin Jeremiah comes to lend a hand. He seems to have a big problem under the hood and, when Jeremiah sees what is sticking out, he knows how to reduce the problem back to normal with a few minutes of hard oral work. Between the two of them, these cousins have the tools to do the job and it all results in a speedy fix-up job.

The afternoon progresses from one family situation to another until Earlene arrives home with her huge karaoke trophy in hand, proclaiming victory at the bar. She doesn't understand why all her relatives were so lazy while she was singing for her supper, and the menfolk all look at each other with more hunger in their eyes.

All in all, *White Trash* is a lot of fun—don't miss the special scene at the end when Amos (alias Rod Barry) shows his special and unique ear-twitching talents.

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RATING: OUT OF FIVE POSSIBLE STARS

MUSIC: ★★★★	SET: ★★★★
BODIES: ★★★★★	STORY: ★★★★
ACTION SCENES: ★★★★★	

The Apprentice 2: Dark Heart

From: Delta Video

Featuring: Joe Landon, Desmond Monclair, Cameron Sage, Danny Rhymes, Trent Atkins, Michael Brandon, Caesar Mancini, Anthony Holloway

Running Time: 105 minutes

For Joe Landon, walking his dog in the Malibu Beach area is a pleasant way to get some exercise, but when he returns home his mood changes quickly. Full of vigor, he crosses the threshold of his beautiful house, calling out his partner Victor's name. Unfortunately, there is no sign of his lover, the closet is empty and only a note is left on the coffee table. To Joe's dismay, the note reveals that he and his dog are now alone, as Victor has decided to move on. The handsome, muscular Joe is stunned and doesn't know what he is going to do.

Very soon, his friend Desmond comes by for a visit and is equally shocked to hear of Victor's sudden departure. The two friends share their surprise and Desmond wonders about his friend's future. It seems the only answer is Joe going back to what he was trained to do: being a high-class escort; after all, the bills have to be paid and food has to be on the table.

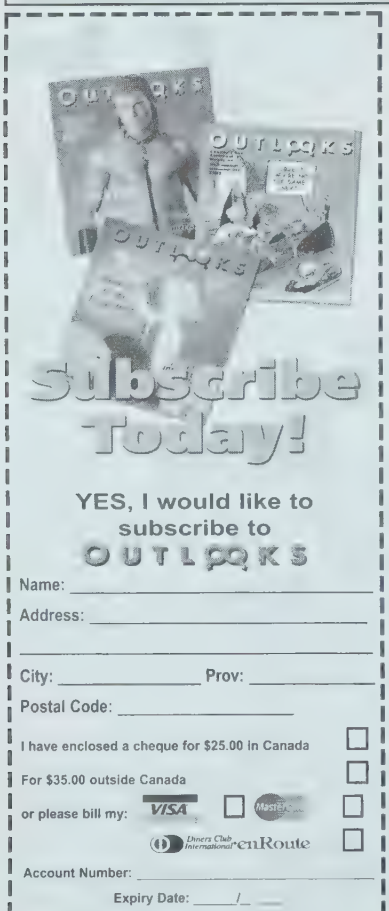
A few weeks later, Desmond and Joe meet with new recruits for the resurrected business venture. Three hot guys-Anthony, Danny and Caesar-are eager to learn the techniques required to be masters of the sex trade, and "old pro" Joe proves to be a real headmaster. He begins by showing Danny why he's tops at what he does and Danny proves to be an equally good student. Even though he, himself, is well hung, Danny is in awe when Joe reveals his amazing tool of the trade and dutifully submits to a hard lesson.

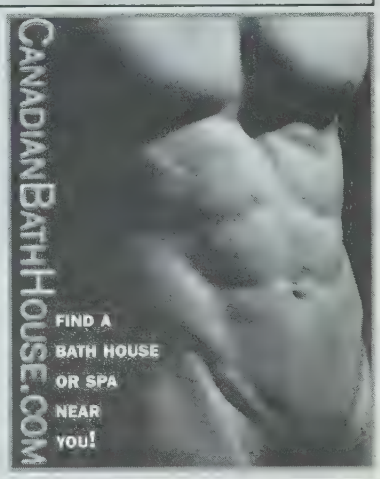
Each of the new recruits is slowly introduced to a new high-class customer and they are all proud to demonstrate their professional techniques. When Caesar is confronted with Michael Brandon's renowned monster, he proves that no task is too big to handle for a quick-study freshman. However, the surprise is when Danny and Desmond give in to their secret feelings for each other and a big romance begins in this den of sexual freedom. Their passion is real and they know they are perfect fit for each other. Although Joe is happy for the new lovers, he is mindful of practical matters, so it's back to business as usual in this hothouse of sex.

Review sponsored by

RATING: OUT OF FIVE POSSIBLE STARS

MUSIC: ★★★★	SET: ★★★★
BODIES: ★★★★★(★)	STORY: ★★★
ACTION SCENES: ★★★★★	





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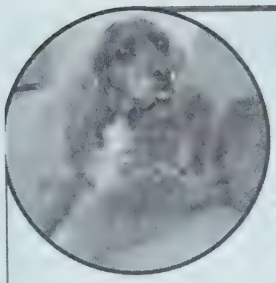

Dear Freddy,

I've been fooling around with this guy for about a year now—it's totally casual and we just get together "whenever", no strings attached. So far it's been a great set-up for both of us—I'm always really busy and he says commitment freaks him out. Well, guess what? I ran into him about two weeks ago and he was holding hands with a woman! As soon as I saw *him*, he saw *me* and went as white as a sheet. Then he turned her around suddenly and went off in the other direction. What the hell happened?!
Confused

Dear Confused,

Please don't take this the wrong way but I think you'd have been more accurate in signing your letter as "Stupid" instead of the moniker you chose. (If you wanted to soften it a bit you could have gone the posh route and hyphenated it as "Stupid-Naive" or something along those lines.) I'll tell you exactly what happened, Stup—I mean, Confused: loverboy panicked when he and his regular lay ran into "the other woman"—namely *you*. Let me take a wild guess here, sweetheart: he always called *you* for a tryst but you couldn't call *him*, he was more available during the day than at night and he had a morbid fear of hickies—correct? Am I getting warm here? Are you getting nauseous? Ah, success!

Poor Confused, caught in the deceitful web of a card-carrying bisexual, with only a load of dirty sheets to show for it (I say keep 'em, like Monica did with the dress—he could be prime minister one day). You're probably wondering what to do now, aren't you? Well, considering he used you as a secure and comfortable alternative to cruising in the bushes, I say dump his ass—that is, *if* he ever calls you again. Apparently, the only fear of commitment he had was to being himself. Chin up, hon; at least you can rest assured that years later, when he's fumbling around with his prick in a prickle bush somewhere, you'll be living the fabulous and exotic life of an urban homosexual—along with, one hopes, someone else who's not afraid to be who he was born to be.

Kisses on yer pink parts
Fred

Dear Freddy,

I just started working for a friend of mine and it looks like things aren't going to work out. We've always been close and have gotten along just fine, but he's a totally different person on the job. I used to think the way he treated some of his employees (more sarcastic than mean) was funny, but now he's being like that with *me*! He's fine when we're not at work but whenever I'm "on the clock", as he puts it, he treats me differently. I don't like being there but I think if I quit it will affect our friendship. Do you have any suggestions?
Carl L. J.

Dear Carl,

Does your middle initial stand for "Lazy"? Maybe "Layabout" is closer to the truth. It seems to me that you're upset because your friend—and now your boss—expects you to work while you're "on the clock", just like all the other people in his (?) employ. What's so upsetting or surprising about that?! You've just told me that you are aware of how he treated his employees before you even started the job—why would (or should) that be any different with you? If he *did* treat you differently, guess who'd be writing a letter like this in your stead? Your co-workers.

Look, Carl, you both made an obvious mistake, 'cause friends just shouldn't work with friends—or worse still, *for* friends. There's a whole dynamic in that relationship that's doomed to failure, or can at least result in many wasted hours of needless bitching around the watercooler/urinal/sandwich truck. I mean, honestly, that's like paying to have sex with a hustler and then expecting him to pick up the tab for lunch afterwards—it's simply not how these things are supposed work. I know that really is a terrible and inappropriate example but I'm trying to send a message to someone out there who just did exactly that and there just isn't enough space here to wag my finger at both of you. Sorry to be so unsympathetic but I've just had to deal with Stupid—sorry, *Confused* and the Case of the Busted Bisexual. God, I'm a regular Nancy Drool, here—call in the Hardy Boys for a three-way! My advice? Send your boss flowers, quit and get on with the proper business of being friends.

Hope this helps.
Freddy

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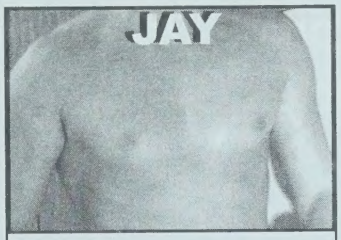

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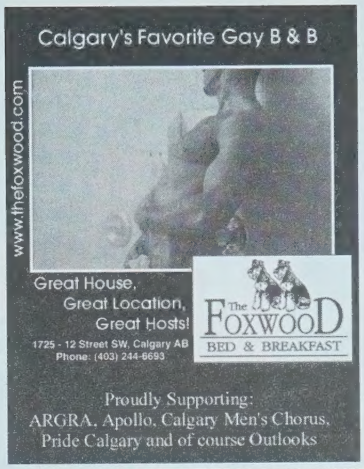

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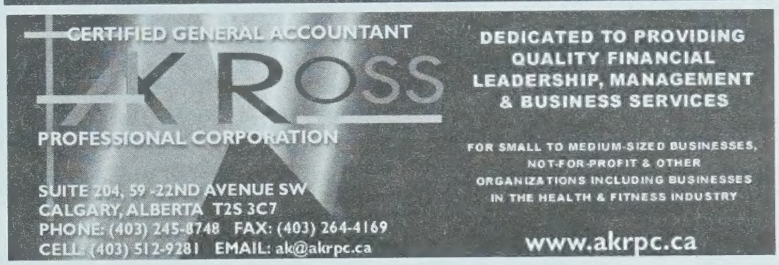

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